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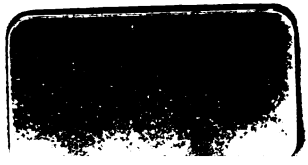

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# CAMERON.

## CHAPTER I.

"In Britain's isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands."

IN a central county of England, surrounded by domains more extensive than fertile, stood the ancient and somewhat decayed residence of Earl Marsden, a mansion which, however antique, scarcely merited the high sounding appellation of castle; for, except that the entrance front was inclosed in a paved court and flanked by a few round towers of clumsy architecture, it had no claim to such distinction—none whatever to the rank of a baronial habi-

tation. It had no remains of feudal strength to atone for a certain degree of desolation in the whole, or to awaken those feelings with which the reliques of former greatness are contemplated. It was a long, low building, which owed as little to modern improvement as it had done to original design, with mullion window frames and lattice casements, calculated rather to exclude than admit the cheering light of heaven: it was nevertheless sufficiently capacious for the accommodation of a numerous establishment. A wide but gloomy hall, and as dark a corridor, led to several reception rooms equally sombre, the principal of which were wainscoted with black oak, and hung with the portraits of many generations. These apartments, furnished for the marriage of their present proprietor's great-grandfather with the heiress of a house as ancient, had undergone no change whatever since that period, except that, under the united influence of time and damp, the gilding of tables, chairs, and picture-frames, instead of its original lustre, had assumed a hue similar to the dark

polished floor; and that a small Persian carpet, which covered about one-third of this floor, had been twice new grounded by the fair hands of two industrious Countesses.

It was truly a cheerless residence, and one that, when shrouded in December fogs, might tempt a hypochondriac to hang or drown himself. Not that fog was there confined to any peculiar season; for, situated low, and in a marshy soil, few places were more subject to that bane of health and enjoyment than the wide-spreading grounds of Marsden Castle; and it might partly be attributable to the influence of atmosphere that its inhabitants were more than characteristically dull.

Equally exempt from the interruptions of friends and the encroachments of neighbourhood, Lord Marsden, ensconsed within a fortress of prejudices, lived among his own domestic circle unimproving and unimproved,—disliking the world, which he was too proud to court, and too poor to interest,—more vain of the past than ambitious for the future, and solacing

himself, in lieu of living society, by a continual reference to that which was extinct,—cherishing a tenacious reverence for every thing said and done by his ancestors,—and thinking that no conversation could afford such intellectual delight as that which he enjoyed when descanting upon the wisdom and power of those honoured relatives whose portraits were fading upon the wainscot, and whose remains crowded his family mausoleum—a building darkly conspicuous upon the only rising ground within view, and serving as a continual remembrancer, not of life's brief tenure, but that he represented eleven titled predecessors.

The Marsden property, at one period considerable, had decreased with years, for it belonged to a race whose younger branches, as proud as they were idle, preferred rather to drain from the coffers of their fathers than by any *vulgar* exertion to furnish coffers for themselves; the present inheritor, therefore, somewhere about the end of the eighteenth century, and at the calculating age of forty, found him-

self in the possession of estates mortgaged nearly to their full value, and without other means of preserving them than the common expedient of matrimony.

Matrimony was not, however, so very appalling to his lordship as if it had been a novel idea, for he had canvassed the subject in conversations with his late mother, and had been therefore accustomed to consider it as a natural consequence of, and the only means of perpetuating heirship. Neither had he much trouble in making his selection. A wealthy banker readily paid the price, and purchased the coronet for his only daughter, who with decent conformity exchanged a steel collar for a diamond necklace, and the terminable restraints of a schoolroom for the interminable restraints of Lord Marsden's society; the castle of an earl being associated in her mind with feudal grandeur, modern luxury, taste, elegance, and refinement. Not unwillingly, therefore, did she bid adieu to her indulgent father, and to an affectionate brother, though doomed to compa-

# CAMERON.

VOL. I.

her former liberty—for the winter holidays in Manchester Square, and the summer vacations at Blackheath. For frequently, while Lord Marsden sat, as was his wont, and descanted, during the whole length of a winter's evening, upon the history of eleven generations, omitting neither marriage, inter-marriage, nor death during the detail, his mute companion, uninterested by the sacred theme, would indulge herself in many a wakeful reverie, while visions of former girlish enjoyments flitted before her excited fancy like figures in a phantasmagoria; and these bright fantasies were almost the only visiters which shared her solitary gloom.

Fourteen years elapsed, and were productive of no remarkable change, nor varied by any particular occurrences, except the birth of four children, and one visit to London. Accustomed for so long a period to the sameness of Lord Marsden's life and character—without mental energy—obedient, and a copyist, Lady Marsden became the very counterpart of her Lord in dulness and insensibility. She might have slept

away her life like a dormouse, had not one feeling been constantly awake,—a never-failing dislike of her sister-in-law, Lady Gertrude Percy.

This lady, who had married but a short time before her brother, and to whom his citizen alliance with Miss Durnford had proved extremely offensive, returned, after fifteen years' management of an old easy-tempered husband, to the home of her celibacy, there to impose upon her plebeian sister all those heart-burnings and jealousies which interference is ever sure to create. She had been considerably enriched by the munificence of Sir William Percy, and had acquired withal as large an accession of arrogance as of wealth. Hitherto Lady Marsden had been accustomed to unbounded respect; for the pride of high-breeding was conspicuous in the Earl's manners, which extended its influence even to the manners of his domestics. There was that indescribable something which distinguishes the old servant of an old family; a distance that never forgets its place, yet at

the same time a confidence of protection which ensures what it claims—there was that profound veneration which unsullied rank ever meets with from its dependants, and which every dependant of Marsden Castle was ready to pay to whoever might bear the name revered by their fathers and grandfathers, awaiting the appearance of Lady Marsden amongst them. This had taught her at first to respect herself, sealed her lips, prevented her condescending to complain, and partly reconciled her to her destiny.

The re-appearance, however, of Lady Gertrude Percy into Lord Marsden's family, went near to rob the Countess of this her dearest privilege, for the demon of discord, usurping the place of ceremony, soon banished self-respect. Haughty, supercilious, and severe, Lady Gertrude assumed an influence over her brother, which he tolerated for the sake of her money. He subjected the ladies Anne and Susan, his two eldest daughters, who considered themselves almost emancipated from re-

straint, to a new system of education, totally at variance with that already approved of by their mother, and drove from the school-room three successive governesses, until one was found with a pliability of temper unparalleled, and which might have passed for insensibility, had she not given proof of feeling by taking a warm interest in Lady Eleanor, the youngest and by far the most amiable of her pupils. This child, who was overlooked by her aunt, and therefore of little importance to her mother, being of a disposition extremely unoffending and docile, escaped becoming an object of jealousy or contradiction, and was thus permitted to receive, without opposition, the lessons of a kind instructress.

When Lady Gertrude's elder nieces were released from the discipline of education,—in other words, when they were considered sufficiently informed and accomplished to undertake the awful responsibilities of wives,—each of them exhibited, according to their aunt's opinion, a perfect model of that excellent moral structure

which had her advice for its foundation. But a misjudging world saw not with the same approving eyes; and although Lord Marsden overcame his antipathies, and at the suggestion of his sister attended some few county meetings, still no ardent youth, in compliance with her expectations, became enamoured of the incarcerated fair ones, or offered himself and his credentials for the approbation of their guardians; while many, the antiquity of whose ancestry, and the extent of whose acres she had satisfied herself with, most unaccountably mistaking their own interests, had formed alliances with comparatively modern families, or perpetrated a blot upon their escutcheons by the contaminations of the Continent.

The ladies Anne and Susan, therefore, however peerless, were given no opportunity of making their selection until the arrival of Mr. Charles Durnford, their mother's nephew; who, superseding former lessons by a course of instruction more suited to their tastes, found in his fair cousins no very unwilling pupils; and

Lady Gertrude, after five long years of unwearied vigilance, lived to discover that love's silken cords are of a much firmer texture than the iron bonds of fear, and that the youthful bosom, however its feelings may be chilled, is by nature like the snow-wreath's frozen surface, beneath which many a tender bud finds shelter until spring's first sunbeam comes to warm it into life and loveliness; for, in spite of repeated lectures which she had received upon the government of the heart and affections, Lady Susan yielded to the very first assault, and confessed herself a willing captive of that very enemy against whose wiles she had been so vainly cautioned.

Mr, Durnford's pretensions being warmly supported by the Countess, were of course violently opposed by Lady Gertrude, who, deeply offended at the young citizen's presumption, reprobated her niece's choice as if she had descended for an alliance to the very lowest dregs of society. It was prudently calculated, however, that his riches would be a counterpoise

to the Earl's poverty. The old banker, his grandfather, was ambitious to secure for his grandson the representation of Lord Marsden's county; in exchange therefore for Lady Susan's hand, and her father's influence, a heavy debt still due by his Lordship to the firm of Durnford & Co. was to be cancelled, and a handsome settlement secured to the daughter. Lady Gertrude was more liberal of advice than of money; and although she reasoned upon the subject of family pride to both brother and niece, still the one had discovered that it could suggest no expedient equivalent to matrimony for paying off a debt; and the other had sufficiently learned from experience, that family pride had failed in attracting admirers. Mr. Durnford was therefore successful, and in due course of time a wedding and its attendant festivities enlivened the hitherto monotonous seclusion of Marsden Castle.

Lady Gertrude threatened to withdraw before the celebration of an event so decidedly opposed to her wishes; but perceiving that her threat

was productive of no visible mortification, she condescended to remain and even to assist at the ceremony, in hopes, as she said, of keeping watch over her other nieces, and thus preventing the recurrence of a similar degradation.

Whether her Ladyship's watchful cares met with their reward will be seen in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

"See poor Lavonius, anxious for renown,
Through the long gallery trace his lineage down,
And claim each hero's visage for his own.
* * * * * *
Unconscious, though his sires were wise and brave,
Their virtues only find in him—a grave."

A FEW weeks after this misalliance (as Lady Gertrude called her niece's marriage) had taken place, and the bridal party had been disposed of, Lady Anne having accompanied her sister to Scarborough, the Countess, her only son, a youth scarcely out of his teens, and Lady Gertrude Percy, stood, according to custom, round the breakfast-table, waiting for the Earl. His private library communicated with the break-

fast room; and no sooner was the first stroke of nine heard to reverberate upon the house clock, than he let himself out from that learned retreat, where, to borrow the expression of a contemporary nobleman, "he read all day, and no one was ever the wiser;" and it would have been but little gratifying to him could he have remarked with how much more of fear than pleasure his approach was met. Being, however, one of those persons always so self-engrossed as to have no leisure for mortifying discoveries, restraint passed current with him for deference, and awe for duty. His morning salutation never amounted to more than a low bow to his lady and sister, accompanied by a wave of the hand generally, signifying that his children were recognised, and that every one might be seated. Like many who have but little to show for their time, he was a tenacious timeist; and woe to the defaulter who should happen not to be present at this ceremonious greeting. Lady Eleanor was this morning a defaulter; and the frown upon her father's brow, as he glanced his

stern eye toward the vacant place commonly occupied by her, imposed even more than usual silence upon the little group. Lord Lorimer changed colour as he followed the direction of that portentous eye; but Lord Marsden turning for a few moments to the window, from which he had a full view of the mausoleum, apparently a more interesting subject of contemplation than any animated object in the room, his son had time to recover some degree of self-possession ere those stern regards were to be again encountered.

Conversation at Lord Marsden's table generally took its tone from himself, if that might be called conversation where one leading person, and that person a tiresome egotist, contrived to engross it exclusively. Fancying himself an antiquarian, when he was merely a genealogist, his knowledge of genealogy originating in pride, rendered it the most disagreeable acquirement he could have cultivated. Pride of ancestry was his ruling passion; and although perhaps it is a passion less tolerated

in society than many of a more vicious tendency, it was nevertheless one which was not, in his case, without some advantages, for it was to this passion that he owed his voluntary seclusion from a world in which length of pedigree, without the concomitants of talent, accomplishments, or wealth, meets but with little of that consideration which the pride of ancestral dignity is so much disposed to exact.

Every opinion at Marsden Castle yielded to that of its arrogant Lord. Even Lady Gertrude was silenced in his presence; for though overbearing to all besides, in her pride she remembered that her brother was an Earl.

Upon the occasion just alluded to, a more than usual silence prevailed, and the unsocial meal had nearly ended without the utterance of a single word, when his Lordship, in accents savouring of reproach, thus ventured to address his sister:—

"'Tis rather extraordinary that your Ladyship should be so very much mistaken in the object of Sir Charles Monckton's attentions,

whose preference for Eleanor is truly vexatious, particularly as I was led to believe that he intended making an offer to Lady Anne. Really, sister, the result of your observations is far less agreeable than I was led to believe. That my eldest daughter should not take precedence, is quite out of rule; Sir Charles should have known better; however, it is not a match to be rejected upon a mere point of etiquette. There are few better hereditary estates in the country —few older baronets in England than Sir Charles Monckton. In every other respect, except in his choice between my daughters, he fully merits my approbation. That is an oversight, however, which I did not expect from him."

"Pardon me, my dear Lord," returned Lady Gertrude, smiling for very malice as she spoke, "but you may expect any thing, no matter how disagreeable, while children are brought forward as women, and while such mixed society is tolerated in this house."

"What does your Ladyship mean by mixed society?" inquired Lady Marsden.

"Your daughter's disobedience in presuming to decline the honour of Sir Charles Monckton's alliance, and the effrontery with which her motives have been confessed, are sad illustrations of my meaning, Sister. But such consequences were not unexpected by me. I foresaw them long ago."

"And why," again asked Lady Marsden, "did not your Ladyship kindly warn us of the danger?"

"Because the Scotch officer is a friend of your nephew, Sister."

"A very accomplished and a very handsome gentleman, too, Aunt," said Lord Lorimer, in an undertone, addressing Lady Gertrude; to whom few suppositions could be more offensive than that she could be guilty of admiring beauty in the other sex.

"So much the worse, Sir," she answered, quite loud enough to be heard by her brother. "His appearance, handsome as you say it is, I do not recollect to have remarked. And for his accomplishments—"

"Accomplished devil!" interrupted Lord

Marsden, at the utmost pitch of his voice; "would that he had perished in some field of battle, or died of the yellow fever, before I had been fool enough to permit such a designing Scot to introduce himself beneath this honourable roof. Though, as far as regards Lady Eleanor Marsden, his life or death makes little difference now. He must be forgotten by her, as if he had never existed; nor shall her weak and ill-timed confession, as she calls it, retard the progress of Sir Charles Monckton's suit. I desire particularly that this alliance should be settled without delay, at least before the dissolution of Parliament. Mr. Durnford's interest in the county will be thus doubly secured. Perhaps we may command the borough also; and it is needful that we look about us. Persons of yesterday are pushing themselves into notice—they must be kept out. Eleanor shall marry Sir Charles; I say it—and what I say, I abide by. Weak minds only yield to conviction—to circumstances, I mean. Mine once made up, even the revolution of a state

would not change it. Lord Lorimer, I belong to the aristocracy—you belong to the aristocracy—we must therefore uphold the opinions and the authority by which it is supported."

His Lordship having delivered himself of his speech, looked round upon his hearers with an air as self-satisfied as it was resolute; while his sister took up the argument, and descanted still more volubly upon the necessity of absolute opinions, authority, obedience, &c. &c. illuminating her subject, as it were, by significant looks and inuendos, meant as hints to Lord Lorimer and his mother, none of which were either misunderstood or forgotten.

"It is rather unfortunate," observed Lord Lorimer, in answer to a pathetic lament of his aunt upon the disobedience of Lady Eleanor, "that Susan, who has had the benefit of your Ladyship's example in a much greater degree, should have turned out so untractable. She presumed to think for herself, and has not proved particularly amenable to control."

"And Eleanor," replied the angry aunt, "is

a melancholy proof of the mischief perpetuated by indulgence. Had Lady Susan been treated with less weakness, your younger sister would have been deterred from acting still more unworthily. But, thank Heaven! I have nothing whereof to accuse myself. The constant guard kept over their conversation, so far as I was permitted to interfere, and the labour I was at to impress them with a just idea of their own importance, happily relieve my conscience from all self-reproach."

"Children!" cried the Earl, "for whom in their very cradles I exacted the most scrupulous respect,—interdicting all that familiarity which nurses consider themselves authorised to practise, but which I positively forbade; both Lady Marsden and myself setting the example in our own persons, and never permitting ourselves to fondle, or address them by any other appellation than that to which by courtesy they are entitled. Could we do more? Was it possible to guard against evil with greater caution?"

"Your Lordship," observed his son, with

profound gravity, " may possibly recollect that by some unlucky chance, my sister Eleanor lost the benefit of such early advantages; for, if I remember correctly, her baptism was delayed for several hours, and consequently, in that interval, she went by the familiar name of baby ?"

" You do bring to my mind, Son, that Lady Eleanor's baptism was delayed for several days, in consequence of the respectable clergyman, whose privilege it was to perform that ceremony, being too ill to venture out."

" Having completely accounted for Eleanor," said Lord Lorimer, (who had his own reasons for prolonging the conversation even at the risk of offending,) " we should proceed to find out some excuse for the others."

" Save yourself the trouble, Sir," interrupted his aunt, " of providing excuses for Lady Anne, until her conduct calls for your interference. Strong as the present contagion seems to be, she, I am certain, will never follow such mean examples, or do any thing derogatory to

her high descent. Your eldest sister has a proper idea of family pride, and some respect for her uncontaminated ancestry.

"Nor is my sister Eleanor without her merit upon that score," continued the persevering Lord Lorimer: "for really her choice is far from being derogatory. Captain Drummond, but for an accidental attainder, might be at this moment an earl as well as my father, and with a much longer stem to his family tree."

"A truce with such conversation!" cried Lord Marsden in a rage. "The remark is as treasonable as the subject is traitorous. Let not that person be named in my presence. This childish folly shall terminate within an hour. 'Twill be a week to-morrow since I turned that Scottish adventurer from Marsden Castle, and commanded him to forget the very existence of Lady Eleanor. She has been too long suffered to remain in obstinate seclusion, and yield to feelings which she should blush to own. All consideration for such weakness ceases from this

moment. Sir Charles Monckton comes to-day. She must receive him according to my wishes, and with the respect to which he is entitled. Here, my Lord Lorimer, is the key of your sister's apartment; report what has been said, and assure her, that to remonstrate with me, or hope to shake my determination, will prove as futile as the attempt to remove their attainder from the Scottish rebels. Be correct in your representations; for I again repeat, that to evade my commands is no longer in her power: neither opposition nor entreaty can possibly avail. Mr. Durnford's interests—the representation of the county—the unity of such an influence—"

At this moment his Lordship was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of Lady Marsden's woman, who, rushing into the breakfast room quite out of breath, could only articulate, "My Lady! the key!—the key, my Lady!"

Assailed by the Earl and Lady Gertrude both talking at once, and both in a violent passion, several minutes elapsed before Mrs.

Wilson could speak so as to be understood. At last she sobbed out, either in real or affected distress—

"My poor dear young lady! I thought she was sleeping away her troubles, for her bell never rang this morning. But she is either dead or made away with: not a sound can I hear, nor an answer can I get, though I have been knocking at her door these two hours."

"Dead or alive, she shall answer me!" vociferated Lord Marsden, hastily leaving the room, and followed by the whole party. A significant nod from the old porter to Lord Lorimer, as they passed through the hall, was, fortunately for the latter, unobserved by his father, and they all reached Lady Eleanor's door together. Lord Marsden, with an air of triumph, applied his key to the lock, but his prisoner was no longer in safe custody. Her bed had not been slept upon; and, contrary to the habits of similar adventurers, no letter, or other clue to her escape, was left behind.

The father raved—the mother wept—and Lady Gertrude comforted herself by throwing all the responsibility of Eleanor's error upon both; while Lord Lorimer, in hopes of escaping so unpleasant a scene, but with little intention of recovering his sister, offered to pursue the fugitives.

"No!" shouted Lord Marsden; "she is from this moment an alien to us all. I renounce her before my assembled household. She has disappointed all my wishes. She has chosen for herself! Let her name be blotted from our remembrance. She has ceased to be a Marsden! Sir Charles Monckton is lost to us for ever!"

"Perhaps not," mentally ejaculated Lady Gertrude, and drawing up her head, she proceeded to inform her favourite niece of the morning's adventure.

Eleanor was indeed out of reach. She had been travelling northwards since lock-up hour the preceding evening; nor was Lord Lorimer totally ignorant of her destination.

## CHAPTER III.

"And who so his impatience blames,
I wot-no loved at all."

To account for so rash a step, taken by one of a family so strictly guarded, the events of a few weeks must be retraced, and the reader introduced to the partner of Lady Eleanor's flight, who was no other than that Scotch officer so respectfully mentioned by her father, whose troop was stationed within five miles of Marsden Castle, and who might have remained at his quarters till the end of time without receiving any notice from the noble Earl, had he not been a friend of Mr. Charles Durnford. Happening to meet Captain Drummond in one

of his rides, he mentioned him at the Castle, and begged leave to introduce him.

Drummond was accordingly introduced by Durnford at Marsden Castle, and met with a gracious reception. Lord Marsden had been told of the great antiquity of his family—Lady Gertrude of his aristocratic principles, reserved habits, and deep veneration for rank.

At this period the young Eleanor, throwing off the garb of infancy, was permitted to appear in company; and here Drummond saw her, beautiful indeed, but silent, shy, and treated as a child. If any male visitor appeared to notice her, she was sent into the back ground either by her aunt or sisters. There, however, Drummond shortly found the way, and there she soon felt that it was no punishment to be sent.

Pleased by attentions so new, yet so little assuming,—attracted by manners, tender, respectful, and entertaining,—delighting in society such as she had never before enjoyed, Eleanor looked and felt the gayest creature in existence,

still perfectly unconscious that she had any other cause for feeling so than the general hilarity of the occasion.

Drummond was far from being a stoic; nor could he be long in the society of a lovely girl thus thrown in his way without feeling the influence of her charms. But he was several years her senior; and, guarded by that experience which young men early cast upon the world either learn or imagine themselves to have learned, his feelings were not so easily awakened as those of the entire novice. They nevertheless proved, in the present instance, to be quite as susceptible. While believing, therefore, that he only admired, a flame was slowly kindling in his bosom, the force of which did not alarm him until it was too late.

The scanty remnant of an embarrassed property, scarcely deserving the name, situated in a retired part of Lanarkshire, was all that he possessed beside his troop; and he had too much good sense and principle not to be aware, that with no other pretensions than a remote

ancestry and a bare subsistence, the indulgence of admiration for Lady Eleanor Marsden was little short of madness.

Without an unreasonable share of insensibility, he could not but be flattered by the innocent preference which she evinced towards him; still, neither actuated by selfish nor dishonourable motives, he no sooner discovered his error than he determined to take the only step that could insure their mutual safety, and fly from attractions which had proved to him so irresistible. As long as Durnford remained at the Castle, he knew that he should be invited there; but not choosing to confide in him, and believing it impossible to forego the temptation of seeing Eleanor while in her vicinity, he applied for leave of absence, and prepared to make a journey into Scotland.

The day before that on which he was to quit the neighbourhood, Drummond rode over to Marsden Castle to see his friends; meaning to bid them a hasty and a general farewell. But it was what Durnford called a gala day, inti-

mating that some distant acquaintances were to dine there. The dinner-hour was fixed earlier than usual, in order that half a dozen persons, who had travelled half a dozen miles, to sit for half a dozen hours, and utter about as many sentences, might terminate their agreeable visit before the close of evening. When Drummond arrived, Lord Marsden had gone to dress: the ladies had also retired to their toilets; and Durnford, the only person visible, insisted that his friend should make one of the party at dinner. "His Lordship expects you," he continued; "and I calculate upon your assistance in entertaining the younger part of our guests; for, except Sir Charles Monckton, there's a sad lack of beaux; nor is he much to be reckoned upon in the way of an ally, being continually occupied in rolling his large saucer eyes from one fair sister of this house to another, and in making up his mind which of them is most deserving the honour of his hand; while aunt Gertrude fusses and crams him, and makes signs to Lady Anne not to sit in the draught, without any idea

that a person of his sense and discretion, and withal so great a favourite of hers, can possibly cast away a glance upon *the child.* But here comes the Baronet's gaudy equipage, and there stands Eleanor admiring it from her chamber window."

Drummond could no longer resist, and Sir Charles Monckton alighting, they entered the saloon together.

This grand apartment, always highly polished, and in summer divested of carpeting, was as slippery as any frozen lake in North Britain when prepared for a national hurling match; and Lady Gertrude, rising from her seat at the top of the room to honour by a stately courtesy an unobtrusive curate who stood near the door, her feet suddenly gave way, and forward she flew,—not one article of furniture being in the way to impede her progress,—with arms outstretched, eyes distended, a fan open in one hand, like Silvester Daggerwood in mock heroics, till she came right upon the bosom of the reverend gentleman, who, unused to so warm a

reception, and taken at the same time by surprise, instead of sustaining the lady, lost his equilibrium, and rolled on the floor clasped in her involuntary embrace.

A loud laugh from Durnford, and a titter from some of the younger guests, were checked on the instant by Lord Marsden's frown; and the prostrate pair were soon raised from the ground, Lady Gertrude having sustained no other injury in her rapid act of locomotion than the demolition of a fan, and the loss of her temper. Mr. Greathead, poor man! left most of his hair-powder upon the floor, and dislocated his thumb; but being too gallant to complain of injury received in such a cause, he suffered in heroic silence. Every one returned to their places, and attention was soon diverted from the dark brow and flushed face of the aunt to an object of very different interest. Eleanor, who had witnessed the arrival of Drummond, now entered the saloon, attracting all eyes by the bright and joyous expression of her beautiful countenance, and

winning all hearts by the grace and dignity of her deportment, little aware of the disappointment which her young feelings were so soon to suffer, and beaming on her lover looks expressive at once of welcome and delight.

Durnford, who, to atone for a moderate share of wit, was in the habit of having recourse to a species of badinage not always well-timed, soon began to banter his friend upon the anxiety so suddenly expressed to visit Scotland, and greatly to exaggerate the unwillingness with which he had consented to spend even that last day at the Castle.

Drummond did not parry the attack with his usual spirit; and the simple fact, that he was to set off for Scotland on the morrow—to leave her for a length of time, perhaps for ever—fell like a thunder-bolt upon the ear of Eleanor; nor had he an opportunity to console her with a single word of explanation, even could explanation have availed to restore her peace.

The nature of her sentiments was no longer an enigma, and, pale and agitated, she felt as a

criminal revealed to all beholders. Drummond gazed upon her with emotions which he dared not investigate; but if they partook of a momentary triumph, repentance for having perhaps stayed too long within the very sphere of the magnet by which he was attracted, and the consciousness that cruel necessity left him no alternative but flight, proved a punishment equal to his momentary selfishness. The awkwardness of such a situation encreased every moment. She was surrounded by observers. He dared not approach, or distinguish her while making his agitated adieus; and with the first guest who departed he hastened away.

Poor Eleanor! what a sad termination was here to a few weeks of happiness! Sacred, however, be the tears and the blushes with which the pride of woman maintains the conflict of undeserved sorrow, whether arising from the consciousness of having cast away her affections upon an ingrate, or the still deeper humiliation of fearing that she has betrayed her weakness to a vain-glorious conqueror, "who loves the conquest, but the conquered slights."

Drummond, however, was neither an ingrate nor a heartless conqueror, but hurrying from the Castle, he felt scarcely less wretched than the gentle being whom he so passionately loved, and without whom neither wealth nor honours could be of any value to him.

Determined, however, in his plans of self-denial, he spent the hours usually dedicated to sleep in preparing for his early journey. But that journey was unexpectedly retarded. The lieutenant, who was to have been charged with his duty, had been attacked in the night by severe indisposition, and Drummond was necessarily obliged to remain at his quarters.

With undeviating fortitude he abstained for a whole week from visiting at the Castle, and suffered his friend Durnford to leave the country without apprising him that his own departure had been prevented; but the pale face, the altered expression, the trembling figure of Eleanor, as last he saw her, harassed him incessantly; while the cruel idea, that she was justly offended, aggravated the misery to which he condemned himself. He could endure it no

longer, and therefore determined to see her once more, explain his situation, and then bid her farewell for ever.

"'Tis but for once," he again repeated, as he alighted from his horse, and followed a servant to the saloon where Eleanor sat listlessly over her tambour frame.

The sudden appearance of him whom she believed to be far distant, but upon whom her thoughts were continually bent, covered her with a confusion which she vainly endeavoured to conceal. His reception was indeed very different from any he had before experienced; but it was not the less flattering, nor was such an opportunity of making his purposed explanation to be resisted. The excessive agitation of his auditor, coupled with the inopportune entrance of Lady Marsden, left much of what he had to say unsaid. On seeing her mother, Eleanor darted out of the room. When she gained her own apartment, a burst of tears relieved the fulness of her heart; but they were the sweetest she had ever shed; and when she descended to dinner, and found that her lover

made one of the small circle,—when she heard her father invite him to meet her brother on the morrow, he must have been insensible indeed, if he doubted the cause of a happiness so apparent.

The invitation was accepted, for Drummond had much more to explain. It was repeated, and again accepted, for there was something still unsaid.

Ignorant of his pretensions, or of the value of riches, it occurred not to Eleanor that such a man could be rejected by her parents, until his own candid avowal convinced her of the truth. Then indeed she wept the necessity that must separate them; but while assured of his attachment, and of seeing him occasionally, she could not be totally unhappy. They mutually deplored that a parting must ultimately take place; still, from day to day, that parting was deferred. Their intentions were upright as their hearts were sincere; but they had yielded to temptation, and circumstances accelerated their destiny.

Of all her family, Lord Lorimer, an only

brother, but two years older than herself, was most beloved by Eleanor, and he in return gave her as much of his love as he could spare from his own gratifications. School and college were to this young nobleman scenes of comparative liberty; but it was not until making an excursion into Scotland that he really tasted its sweets, and the vivid descriptions with which he amused his favourite sister upon his return, found ready credence in her willing ear. The permission to visit an old school-fellow in Perthshire had been vainly asked for many a summer, for Lord Marsden held it a duty incumbent upon himself to be the task-master of his son during the long vacations. His sister Susan's wedding happening, however, to take place in the month of August, Lord Lorimer's request was granted at the only season that Marsden Castle presented an air of gaiety. To Lady Gertrude he owed this strangely-timed indulgence; but she had her reasons for interfering in his favour. In the first place, it was not desirable to her that he should witness the triumph of successful

disobedience; and, in the next, his absence would inflict mortification upon Lady Marsden and her nephew. But regrets for all that he might miss at home were slight drawbacks to the glee with which he set out upon his northern visit, where novelty and pleasure united to delight him.

When Sir Charles Monckton made his intentions in Eleanor's favour known to Lord Marsden, the wretched girl, persecuted by her father, tormented by Lady Gertrude, and repelled by her mother, at whose feet she vainly poured out all the wishes of her heart, instantly made Lord Lorimer the depositary of her bosom's secret, as he was the only member of her own family who seemed to have any feeling for herself, or any consideration for her lover.

Suddenly impressed in Captain Drummond's favour, really sorry for his sister, and hating Sir Charles Monckton, Lorimer encouraged her, whenever opportunity occurred, to persevere in her opposition, or to take the only remedy in her power, and fly from her miserable prison

with a deliverer who waited without its gates to carry her into scenes far better suited to her taste. In short, no situation could be more open to temptation than that in which the unhappy Eleanor was placed: very young and very romantic,—for what is more creative of romance than severity and seclusion,—and without any juster conception of right or wrong than what arose from the dictates of very sensitive feelings. Devotedly attached, and harshly treated by all who should have protected her from harshness,—in want of one kind friend to counsel or support her, except a brother as romantic, and little older than herself,—encouraged by that brother to follow the impulses of her heart, it is no wonder that she ended by reposing her sorrows on the tenderness of him she loved, and terminated her persecutions by yielding to his persuasions.

In a state of agitation not to be described, she forsook the ungracious but natural protectors of her infancy—the home of her youth—to throw herself upon the honour and resources of a comparative stranger. She had numbered

but seventeen years: the stormy voyage of life was still before her; and the whole treasure of her happiness was embarked upon a single venture. The pilot whom she had chosen, however, proved worthy of his trust.

Captain Drummond and the fair companion of his flight were united at the first town in Scotland, where the necessary facilities were afforded; after which the ceremony was again, but more respectably, performed at Edinburgh. Drummond then carried his bride into Westmoreland, who awaited among its beautiful scenery for the forgiveness which she flattered herself that her family would accord when they should have time to reflect upon the very excellent, and (in her mind) unanswerable arguments which she had so pathetically advanced as justifications of her disobedience; while, in the interval, she enjoyed the delights of love and liberty with a companion truly deserving of her affection, and calculated to realise her most sanguine hopes of happiness.

Week, however, succeeded week, and Drummond's leave of absence was drawing to a close

without one token of recognition from Marsden Castle. Eleanor wrote to her father, to her mother, and to Lord Lorimer; and she was trembling at the idea of returning to her parents before receiving their pardon, when a letter from her brother, stating her absolute renunciation by Lord Marsden and all her family, himself excepted, quashed every hope for the present, and brought into the eyes of Drummond's beautiful wife the first tears he had seen there since that trying hour when, alone and unprotected by a single friend, she had given him her hand at Gretna.

## CHAPTER IV.

Ah, who the exquisite delight can tell,
The joy which mutual confidence imparts!
Or who can paint the charm unspeakable
Which links in tender bonds two faithful hearts,
In vain assailed by Fortune's envious darts:
Their mitigated woes are sweetly shared,
And doubled joy reluctantly departs.
Let but the sympathising heart be spared,
What sorrow seems not light? what peril is not dared?

MRS. TIGHE.

DRUMMOND, by the most delicate demonstrations of affection, endeavoured to soothe his wife's disappointment, and the gentle Eleanor was soon consoled for her parents' severity by the tenderness of a husband she adored. He managed to exchange duty with a brother

officer, who was stationed at a considerable distance from Marsden Castle. This removed for a while the terror with which Eleanor shrank from the idea of their joining the regiment. Perceiving, however, that she sighed for a settled place of abode, Drummond turned his thoughts to a small but picturesque estate which he possessed in Lanarkshire.

He had not visited this humble inheritance since his boyhood, but the sparkling beauties of the Clyde, and the dilapidated house upon its banks, were remembered with delight; for there his mother had lived, and there his holidays had been spent. It was the only remnant of property left in his family. He expected to find the old building a heap of ruins; he knew, however, that there would be abundant materials upon the spot to erect one of smaller dimensions; and Lady Eleanor was not only content to put up with any accommodation, but anxious to encounter every inconvenience which might ultimately secure them an unmolested home. She gave his plans her warmest approbation, and

confirmed his resolutions of immediately putting them into free operation.

It was in the middle of June that these willing exiles from a busy and troublesome world took possession of the peaceful glen which Drummond called his own. The old house was perfectly uninhabitable, and they had no little difficulty in suiting themselves with a temporary residence until a new one should be erected. A satisfactory arrangement, however, was soon made. For an adequate remuneration, the parish minister was at length induced to let them have the manse just then fitted up for himself, and to remove with his wife into the village.

A small but tasteful cottage was soon in progress on the site of the old mansion, and it is to be questioned if its projectors felt happier in the first moment of understanding each other's hearts, than when laying the foundation of that humble dwelling which was to shelter them hereafter; and where all they loved and

hoped to love, were to be domesticated. Even worldly difficulties enhanced the value of their joys, because to encounter and overcome them, exertion must be mutual. She who knew herself to be in heart, and thought, and deed, the partner of him she loved, as gratefully knew how to estimate her blessings.

She had not now a wish, except to be forgiven by her family; nor had woman ever less cause to repent the rash act of which she had been guilty, than Lady Eleanor Drummond, whose all of earthly bliss was centred in her husband and her home,—and who, desirous of escaping observation, and of being exempt from curious interruption, laid aside the rank that might have subjected her to both; and was known only among her rustic neighbours from the hour she first entered that secluded district, "as the unassuming guid wife o' the Corrie Glen."

Early recollections, and natural propensities, united to active habits, rendered the occupations of a country life particularly interesting

to the retired soldier; and his Lady, young, docile, and devoted to him, was the participator of all his pursuits, and the sweet encourager of all his economical designs.

While yet tenants of Mickleburn Manse, the Lady Eleanor gave birth to a daughter, which added new interest to all their domestic enjoyments, and caused some delay in the progress of their building. In the course of the next summer, however, it was completely finished; and before the rigours of winter set in, the cottage was perfectly habitable; where, collecting all the comforts which their moderate wishes considered necessary, or their restricted means might permit, they commenced the active duties of a life that was entered upon with unalloyed anticipation of lasting happiness.

The contemplative and literary tendencies of Drummond, suited well with the secluded habits and predilections of his happy partner; while the limited establishment of the Corrie Glen was regulated with a nicety, and even

elegance, which at once bespoke the taste and refinement of its possessors, and the propriety of its directors.

They avoided all familiar intercourse with the neighbourhood, and, except the Parish Minister, there was no one within reach who had any pretensions to seek an acquaintance with them.

Eleanor soon became identified, as it were, with a country, dear to her as the birth-place of a husband, whose undeviating affection added to the charming qualities of her child, left her nothing to regret or to wish for. And time went on so tranquilly with these happy recluses, that they might have been in danger of forgetting its lapse, but for the maturing graces of their daughter, who soon became, not only the willing pupil, but the delightful companion of her parents; exciting their fondest love, recalling the pursuits of their youth, and by the gentleness of her temper, and the quickness of her perception, rendering the discipline of education more a pleasure than a restraint.

Thus eighteen years rolled on in an almost unvaried tenor: no storms had visited their dwelling, except those which were incidental to climate, until the death of Lady Marsden overshadowed it with a transient cloud, and the arrival of an agreeable visiter gave a new interest to their enjoyments.

The funeral obsequies were performed with the same pomp as those of her predecessors: the mourning was ordered in the same words, and Lord Marsden shut himself up in his apartments exactly for so many hours as had been customary with his forefathers upon similar occasions; but the Countess's removal from the head of the establishment made no other alteration than that of Lady Anne immediately assuming her place. Nor, in consequence of Lord Lorimer's absence on the Continent, did any notice of this event reach the Corrie Glen but through the medium of a newspaper. Mrs. Drummond, naturally much affected, obtained a reluctant leave from her husband once more to address Lord Marsden; but, as here-

tofore, the application was treated with silent neglect.

It was just about this period, and on the anniversary of Ellen's eighteenth birthday, that her father announced his expectations of a guest. He had been of late years under the necessity of making occasional journeys to Edinburgh in consequence of a lawsuit. Wearied by delay, and attributing his disappointment most probably to the real cause, that of having employed too eminent a practitioner, he at length resolved to try what might be done by changing lawyers; and struck by the glow of honest pleasure which illuminated a young barrister's expressive countenance, when announcing to an humble client that his cause was won, he instantly transferred the hitherto neglected brief to one whose time was not so much occupied as that of older counsel. The result proved favourable: Drummond's cause was brought on at Glasgow, a much more convenient distance from his home, and ended in a manner highly creditable to him who advocated it. Some papers remained to be signed, and the

young lawyer, in order to save his client an expensive journey, had made a circuit of some miles to call upon him at the Corrie Glen, had been invited to repeat his visit, and was the guest now expected.

"This is a most auspicious morning, my sweet Ellen," said her father, as he congratulated his smiling daughter on her natal day; "and it is particularly welcome, as I expect my friend, Mr. Cameron, to assist in its celebration. You will be pleased with such an agreeable addition to our party."

"Mr. Cameron! what, the advocate who spent one day here last April? I remember him well!" cried Ellen joyfully.

"And it seems he has not forgotten us," replied her father, "for he comes now to make a longer visit, and kindly to assist me in securing this now unembarrassed patrimony to my own two Eleanors."

"O Drummond!" exclaimed his weeping wife, "talk not, I beseech you, of settling upon me: it has an ominous signification. I rejoice—indeed I do—that you possess this dear retreat

without embarrassment; but keep it, dearest, to yourself, and do not speak of—"

"My Eleanor," interrupted her husband, tenderly embracing her: "whatever I may do for the final adjustment of my affairs can neither abridge our lives nor our happiness. Humble as are our means, we must secure independence to this dear child. But let us talk of our expected guest. Ellen professes to remember him, though I forgot that she was present when he called here. That short visit, however, presented no fair specimen of his agreeable qualities; for, if I mistake not, the flowers of rhetoric, during our colloquy upon that occasion, gave place to the technical phrases of the law."

But here the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of their expected guest, who walked leisurely towards the house, followed by a country lad carrying his baggage.

"I like the manner of his approach," observed Drummond: "it is a proof of good taste and consideration."

## CHAPTER V.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt, which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.

SCOTT.

THE person thus again presented to Mrs. Drummond and Ellen, almost forgotten by one, and so well remembered by the other, was one eminently calculated to awaken apprehensions in a mother anxious for her daughter's peace, and to excite high expectations in a young recluse, whose intercourse with society had been of the most restricted description;

and although Drummond's sanguine feelings in favour of first impressions subjected him to occasional disappointment, his penetration in this instance equalled his confidence. Nor was the fair and inexperienced Ellen, though still more sanguine, mistaken in her hopes of meeting a gentleman; for such in truth was Cameron, so far as elevation of mind, elegant manners, and a refined education might constitute his claim to that distinction: but that he had any hereditary right, Drummond knew as little as Ellen cared. Nevertheless, the stranger was as hospitably received, and as highly appreciated, "though all unasked his birth and name," as if his arrival had been preceded by a document from the Herald's office. But Cameron was not one to avail himself of such delicate reserve; and however painful the humiliating confession, his new friends were soon aware that he ranked only among those unfortunates who enter society without a legitimate title to its indulgence.

Those, however, to whom he considered such

a disclosure due, were the last persons in the world to estimate a fellow-creature for the sake of his ancestors, or to undervalue individual merit.

Of any circumstances connected with his family, he had no power to speak; for in his little volume of personal history, not a record of genealogy had been preserved. There appeared no acknowledgment, however slight, of paternal tenderness. Cut off from all the ties of kindred, he had been cherished and supported by the hand of charity; and it was in all probability owing to the benevolent care of a humane lady, that his mind and habits were not as low as his birth, perhaps, was base. Ever since he had been of an age to be influenced by association and example, his childhood had been protected, and his education advanced, under the almost maternal care of Lady Percy, whose generosity provided him with ample means to overcome the evils of parental obscurity.

Cameron never ceased to remember with

affectionate regret, the respectable old Clergyman to whom he owed his first lights in the pursuit of knowledge—his earliest apprehension of good and evil—the formation of his character, and the zealous cultivation of his understanding. Nor was the death of that benevolent man without its baneful effects upon the feelings of his pupil, for in consequence of that event, the orphan boy was placed at school, where he soon learned the truth of his condition; that humiliating truth which flushed his youthful cheek with the burning blush of shame.

Yet, if the aspirations of ambition, or the germs of pride, indigenous in his bosom, were indicative of honourable birth, he was not basely born; for even amongst the school-boys who so eagerly enlightened him, he was distinguished by the appellations of "thoroughbred, and high-mettled."

It was upon his removal to this public school after the death of his old preceptor, that he acquired his first knowledge of Lady Percy;

a widow of large fortune, and lately come to reside in the Scottish metropolis. From that period his holidays were spent at her house, where, in common with her only child, a little girl, nine years his junior, he shared the luxuries of a splendid establishment, and the advantages of refined society. But the information imparted by his schoolfellows at the sensitive age of eleven, did not fail to arouse his warmest resentment. The luckless informant, who merely spoke from conjecture, was repelled with a scornful denial, and received the summary chastisement usually resorted to in juvenile altercations. Cameron then flew to Lady Percy, and glowing with indignation, demanded from her the power of refuting so base a calumny; but he had the mortification to receive only an evasive reply to his inquiry, with a command, uttered in accents of unwonted severity, never again to offend her by recurring to the subject.

From that cruel moment, the tone of Cameron's feelings was changed—his spirits droop-

ed, while the playful, animated, and idle truant, soon became studious, reserved, and melancholy. Not the less spirited when called upon for exertion, but more alive to offence, and less easy to conciliate when offended.

As soon as Cameron left school, he assumed courage to renew his former application, but still without success. Lady Percy's emotion when the request was repeated, her assurances that the explanation he urged would rather realize than remove any mortifying doubts which he might wish to clear up, deterred him from pressing her further, and determined him to defer repeating his application until the time when he should be called to the Bar. Then, with the most respectful earnestness, he again entreated some information upon a subject which lay heavy at his heart. But all he could elicit amounted to no more than that circumstances of a very peculiar nature involved the fate of his parents, and consequently his birth, in a mystery which could not for the present be explained—that he had no legiti-

mate claim upon the protection of a single individual, and, except his present protector, had no friend upon earth, who, during his helpless infancy, had held out a hand to save or serve him.

Grateful for her protection, but dissatisfied with her reserve, restless and ill at ease, his mind could not settle to the occupations which had hitherto engaged him; for, until this last denial, he had cherished some hope of ascertaining his place in society, and of commencing his legal career with a name to which his right, at least, might not be questioned. But Lady Percy, as severe to him when a man as she had been when a boy, cruelly and decidedly disappointed such hope. Proudly conscious, therefore, of inferiority, he determined to relinquish his learned pursuits, and seek, amid the tumults of a war then desolating almost the half of Europe, forgetfulness of his doubtful origin.

But these visions of military renown were dispelled by the advice of an old friend and

class-fellow, who, a few years his senior, had been his constant champion, and even the assertor of his claims to legitimate rank.

Macdonald was already a soldier, and from him Cameron expected nothing less than warm encomiums for his spirited resolves. But the career of the former, though short, had not answered his own expectations. He had obtained his colours in a regiment raised in the Highlands, and encountered, with his fellow-countrymen and namesakes, the pestilent climate of a British settlement in the West Indies. The weary term of expatriation over, Macdonald expected to reap the hard-earned privilege of recruiting his health amongst the mountains, for whose gales he languished, instead of which the regiment was transported to another colony—himself promoted, much against his inclination, into another corps: and when he met Cameron, after six years' separation, the gallant soldier, smarting under recent disappointment, and the severe affliction of exchanging his graceful tartan for the trim uniform of a low-

land light infantry corps, was not in any humour to second the warlike aspirations of his friend, although our civilian could not but marvel, as he listened to counsels so unlike what he expected, from a youth whose countenance was glowing, while he spoke, with all the ardour of native heroism.

Cameron, though not immediately convinced by the arguments of Macdonald, nevertheless ended by yielding to his advice. Pursuing the course marked out by his benefactress, and early adopted by himself, he soon became devoted to study. He was not, however, the less anxious to obtain a true knowledge of his claims upon Lady Percy's kindness, but was deterred from urging her upon the subject by the extraordinary emotion with which his attempts to renew it were invariably repelled.

This lady, however liberal in some respects towards her protegée, was one of those provokingly bad-tempered persons with whom it is scarcely possible to live in terms of uninterrupted amity; in whose company good hu-

mour itself could scarcely escape contagion, or independence maintain its character. Power was her idol; but when in a contradictory mood, compliance availed as little as opposition to move her, and the chief pleasure of her life consisted in maintaining an ascendancy over every creature upon whose gratitude or duty she could establish any claim.

Haughty and imperious, a casual observer could discern in her bearing nothing but an impenetrable pride; yet those who knew her better might detect many a little subterfuge, and many a mean evasion, when, to gain her point, the aid of such auxiliaries was wanting.

Cameron entered her family a careless lively boy; but his doubtful position in society, of which he soon became acquainted, and a sense of dependance, rather repugnant to his pride, unfitted him to bear with patience the exactions of a protectress, who desired, in return for the good she bestowed, the perfect subjugation of a dependant's will. While possessing all things, but enjoying none, she waged eternal war with

harmless pleasure, and repelled the most innocent mirth, as an enemy to virtue. His temper, perhaps too elastic, was open as the day; her's, perfectly inflexible, was also dark as midnight. Warm, and easily offended, he was still more easily appeased; cold, but quick to take offence, she never could forgive. In a combat so unequal, candour was no match for cunning, and Lady Percy, in the end, came off victorious. Artful persons might have managed her better, for tenacity is no proof of sense. But she was impervious to the stroke of truth, and Cameron, skilled in no other weapon, ceased, when he became a man, and when every moment of his time was precious, to waste it in contention with so stubborn a spirit.

With Rigour as Prime Minister, and Mortification as Chief Secretary, she ruled in her little court a perfect autocrat, and submission cost her high-spirited protegée many a painful struggle; for, though his education was provided for, and his pockets supplied munificently, her favours being conferred without

feeling, became more a burden than a pleasure; and there is, perhaps, nothing more destructive of affection than a continual infliction of mortifications. Yet was her generosity ever repaid by undeviating respect; and the unhappy beneficiary of her bounty, while he exercised his fortitude, strengthened his mind by the daily practice of forbearance.

His friend Macdonald cheered him with visions of independence which arose brightly in the distance: he devoted himself heart and soul to persevering study; and as perseverance seldom fails of success, he would, while pressing onward to the goal, have felt as if already recompensed, had his labours been rewarded by the sympathy of domestic participation. For him, however, there was no such sympathy: Lady Percy encouraged no intimacies—rejoiced in no friendships. Riches purchased her a servile obedience from hirelings—the desire of peace secured her submission from Cameron and her daughter; for compliance is often less painful to generous minds than futile arguments with

obstinate prejudice: so that, spoilt in her own domestic circle, and little regarded out of it, she preferred the liberty only practicable at home to the restraints of a world which prepares many a bitter draught the arrogant and selfish rarely like to swallow; and thus was Miss Percy, a beauty and an heiress, lost to those pleasures which surround the affluent and young,—debarred from elegant society, the highest privilege of rank, and of liberty, the equally precious privilege of obscurity, without other occupation for her time than the indulgence of a thousand idle fancies; while Cameron, with all the requisites for social enjoyment, felt himself under the chilling necessity of repelling, rather than of meeting kindness.

But it was not till the period arrived when he was to attend the assizes as a circuit lawyer—an epoch in his life to which he had long looked forward with the same pleasure as that with which a captive anticipates the promised hour of liberty—that this total want of sympathy was completely evidenced; for Lady Percy, in

whose plans his professional advancement certainly bore no part, instead of listening with complacency to his animated though modest hopes of a successful debut, received the announcement with cold indifference, and restricted his practice to the precints of the Parliament Square. But when she discovered that his determination was absolutely made, nothing could exceed her vexation: she threatened to withdraw her favour, found out various most particular things to occupy all his time, even to the very moment of his leaving home; and contrived to annoy and perplex, though she finally failed to delay him. It was at the period when he had made arrangements to bring on Drummond's business at Glasgow; but he determined not to relinquish a cause to the success of which he had pledged himself, and upon the reputation of which he trusted to found a professional character. Neither could Lady Percy comprehend why a person profiting by her bounty should care about fame, or spend so many hours in labour; and after throwing

away more argument than it afterwards cost him to substantiate Drummond's rights, he left Edinburgh thoroughly mortified by the opposition given to those sanguine hopes in which his chief happiness consisted, and which, if encouraged, might have filled up his mind even to forgetfulness of every existing evil.

But his success at Glasgow—the congratulations generously bestowed by those whose good opinion he so much coveted—praise in itself so new—the grateful acknowledgments of his interesting client, counterbalanced every previous mortification, and more than repaid his long and patient endurance. He kept pace with the judges throughout their circuits, found himself received with that respect which talents united to industry must ever command, felt that he was observed, yet shrunk not from observation, and finally joining a brother barrister, indulged himself in an excursion to Loch Lomond, visited many places celebrated in Scottish history and in Scottish song, and returned to Edinburgh with improved health, renovated spirits, and every disposition to be happy.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Now, said the Nymph, I 'll let you see
My actions with your rules agree;
That I can vulgar forms despise,
And have no secrets to disguise.
I know by all you said and writ,
What dangerous things were men of wit,
You cautioned me against their charms
But never gave me equal arms.
Your lessons formed the weaker part,
Aimed at the head, but touched the heart."

THE repulsed and wretched songstress who prowls through many a close and murky street screaming herself hoarse upon the miserable chance of earning a few pence to purchase a precarious lodging for the night—the luxurious Syren, whose life is one of public exhi-

bition, and whose heart responds to the applause of hundreds — the Sailor, between whom, and every local tie, one half the world intervenes—the school-girl banished from domestic love — all unite in reiterating that "there 's no place like home." And they are much to be commiserated, who, while hearing with their ears, and repeating it with their voices, feel not in their hearts that such is true.

Home had for Cameron its pains, as well as its advantages; but it was home, and he knocked at Lady Percy's door with the feelings of one about to receive pleasure, and hoping to impart it. He had, however, scarcely entered the room where she was sitting, ere those feelings received an instantaneous check; for her recognition of him was pointedly cold and formal. She drew back as he advanced, and kept him at a distance by looks even more repulsive than her actions. Miss Percy stood up, blushed, trembled, was offering him her hand, but catching her mother's eye, withdrew

it instantly. Accustomed to fits of caprice from Lady Percy, he was in the habit of letting them pass unnoticed, but such unexpected rudeness, after so long an absence, took him by surprise, and he hastily inquired "if any thing was the matter? hoped that nothing unpleasant had occurred—that there had been no disagreeable news," &c. &c.

"Miss Percy has been ill," replied her mother, "and my poor nerves of course have suffered. As for news—those who remain so long from home in the pursuit of pleasure, should, methinks, rather impart than require news."

"And what pleasures," said Cameron, believing that his prolonged absence had occasioned her resentment, and wishing to appease it—"what pleasures, after all, exceed those of a welcome home? Or what intelligence can be more interesting than the details of those little every-day domestic occurrences which even the most enthusiastic tourist may sometimes sigh to take a part in. Alicia, I trust," he conti-

nued, addressing himself to her, "is prepared for many demands upon her patience?"

But Alicia did not answer. Her colour varied, her eyes were bent to the ground, and tears, which she vainly attempted to restrain, spoke of a spirit subdued by recent tyranny or sorrow.

"Good Heaven!" cried Cameron, "Miss Percy is very ill. Doctor R—— of course prescribes. Has he not ordered something—change of air, or—"

"You had better retire, Alicia," interrupted Lady Percy. "A little rest may recruit you before dinner. She is still exceedingly weak, and the slightest excitement, even a knock at the street-door, excits her nerves."

Miss Percy arose to obey her mother's suggestion, but her steps were feeble, and she seemed as if scarcely able to walk across the room. Cameron supported her to the door, pressed her hand affectionately, and with much feeling expressed his concern for her illness,

but was answered by a look so tender, so reproachful, and so full of meaning, that without another word, he consigned her to the care of an attendant, and returned to a *tête-à-tête* with her ungracious mother, full of troubled recollections, and almost unconscious of her presence until she brought herself to mind by resuming the conversation.

"You inquire," she said, "if Miss Percy has been ordered change of air? Doctor R—— recommends it strongly; but that, as well as other plans for her advantage, are completely frustrated. I have been obliged to forego all my wishes this summer."

"Change of air is an excellent remedy," returned Cameron; "why delay to try it? the season will soon be at an end."

"It is at an end already," she replied, "two months ago, and a little change might have benefited us both. But I am not accustomed to moving; my servants, I dare say, know nothing of the matter, and being without other assistance, I was obliged to content myself at home."

"Had I conceived that your Ladyship required such assistance—that I was in the slightest degree necessary here, my return should have been expedited. But being ignorant of your wishes—"

"Oh, no more apologies, I pray," cried Lady Percy, interrupting him in the most impatient manner; "you are no doubt always essential, absolutely necessary to our existence—men are seldom ignorant of their own importance! they require not to be informed upon that subject; though I confess, that the presence of any protector, would have relieved me of much anxiety. Besides, expecting you every day, and not knowing when or at what hour you might arrive, it was impossible for me to fix upon any thing, which of my servants I should take, or which leave behind for your accommodation."

"Surely, my dear Madam, you were no so ceremonious upon my account. Any one would have done: the porter, for instance, who always remains in the house."

"I hope, Sir, that you will give me leave to

understand the regulation of my own establishment. I may be permitted to know that much at least, and to have the power of leaving or of taking whichever of my domestics I see fitting. Only that so long as I have an establishment, no inmate of my house, let his pretension be what it may, shall have reason to complain that I am wanting in consideration. Such at least is my intention, but I dare say it is a weak one, and that I require to be set right."

"It cannot be too late to travel south," observed Cameron, apparently unconscious of her ill humour; "our springs are rather severe at Edinburgh, and perhaps it may be advisable to try a more genial climate for Miss Percy?"

"Edinburgh did not use to disagree with her; I am sorry you conceive that it does. Perhaps I am blamed for residing here. My reasons for so doing, need not, however, be questioned by you. Heaven grant that I may not live to repent of my too great zeal for the good of others! And so you think that I do

wrong in keeping Miss Percy at Edinburgh? you, upon whose account I still remain *here*."

"Pardon me, Madam, I had quite a different meaning; and if you will give me leave to explain—"

"Oh, certainly!—Of course, I am so very dull—so very slow of comprehension! But you may be mistaken; it is possible that I may both see and hear much, which you neither wish nor suspect me of comprehending."

Cameron, when subjected to similar specimens of Lady Percy's humour, had either borne them in silence, as undeserving of reply, or parried them with a kind of skilful dexterity, which prevented their amounting to a serious quarrel; for she usually dealt in hints and innuendos, and kept up a sort of side fire, from which it was impossible to escape. Upon the present occasion her attack was more direct, and he felt himself obliged to act on the defensive. But every attempt to mollify her unluckily failed; and, provoked at length by her injustice, annoyed by an expression which

he had seen, and would rather not have seen, in Miss Percy's face, and mortified altogether by a reception so little expected, his patience had nearly failed as his companion grew more and more intolerant, when a seasonable interruption was afforded by the welcome summons of the dinnner-bell.

At table they were joined by Alicia, who, with looks a little refreshed, and manners much more composed, appeared as if wishing to exert herself and be at ease. Although it was very evident to Cameron, from the restraint under which she laboured, that all was not right between herself and her mother, he aided the attempts which she made to converse; talked of his excursion to Loch Lomond—of the interest he had felt in visiting places scarcely known to him, even by description, and of the various ways in which his time had been beguiled. He neither meant to account for, nor to excuse his absence, but in relating his simple adventures it was explained.

He could not describe pleasure so vividly

experienced without some renewal of pleasurable sensations; and his descriptions became more animated than he was himself aware of. Alicia's interest was excited; her looks brightened; she questioned, and was answered: but they had all the conversation to themselves. Silent and moody, Lady Percy reclined in her chair, apparently wrapped in meditation. Her lips indeed moved, but her eyes were fixed on vacancy, and sometimes as if quite unconscious of observation, she uttered a few words aloud; nor was this uneasy reverie interrupted until the moment of retiring to rest.

There can hardly be a situation more disagreeable than that where two persons, used to be at ease, first meet, having parted upon no very amicable terms; when one retains all the appearance of being offended, and where the other wishes, yet fears, to demand an explanation. It was thus with Lady Percy and Cameron when they joined each other on the following morning. Her reserve had assumed even a more determined aspect; and he rather

dreaded than sought the developement of its cause.

A something extraordinary in Alicia's manner had haunted him all night: his conduct to her was determined upon. And as for Lady Percy, he knew her too well not to be aware that, if the first to concede, he was sure to be the victim of oppression; for the slightest movement bordering upon concession had ever, in similar cases, been construed into an admission of error. He therefore made up his mind to wait her time for reconciliation, resume his former habits, and leave the solution of an enigma so obscure to the voluntary will of those who might either explain or forget it. Miss Percy did not appear at breakfast; he ventured a slight inquiry after her health, was answered pettishly, and there the conversation dropped.

The remainder of that morning was occupied in looking over several communications which awaited him; and in their perusal he was sufficiently engrossed to prevent the occurrence of unpleasant thoughts, until Lady Percy again

met him at dinner. She was alone, as at breakfast; and when he asked for Alicia, her reply was so rude as to prevent further inquiry. She did not eat a morsel, and, as soon as the servants cleared the table, she arose, and left Cameron to himself.

He had never before met from her such premeditated rudeness. Former insults were the offsprings of habitual temper—this, most assuredly, proceeded from deep resentment. Either she was so narrow-minded as to be jealous of his late success, or she attributed the change so visible in Alicia to a cause which of all others he would have most sincerely deprecated. He tried to flatter himself that she only acted from pique—that she was really offended by his late absence from home, and that a little exertion of that patience which he was so well practised in, would, before the lapse of many days, restore their small portion of domestic harmony. Should he, however, be mistaken — should she harbour the suspicion which his honour shrunk from, there would be

for him then no other alternative but to quit a house where his presence could be no longer desirable; and, had he consulted his own feelings upon the instant, the removal would have immediately taken place. But, with all her faults, and all her jealousies, Lady Percy had been to him the only parent he had ever known. He owed her both respect and forbearance. She was not happy: the unsubdued irritation of her temper called for pity rather than resentment; and his deliberations ended as they begun, in a resolution to bear with the infirmities of one whose petulance, however vexatious, might have its causes, though they were unknown to him.

In the library, a room appropriated to his use, there blazed a cheerful fire; he drew toward it an arm-chair and reading-desk, with the intention of resuming those studies, the beneficial effects of which he had often experienced in hours of trial similar to the present.

Yet his feelings were too much excited—his imagination had of late been too much abroad—

and he found it more difficult to compress his ideas, and fix his thoughts, than he could have believed possible. In place of the rejected folio he substituted a lighter volume, which lay upon the reading desk; it was Prior's "Emma;" and, opening the book, he smiled to see, by a few fresh geranium leaves that fell from between the pages, that it had been a recent study of Miss Percy's. Her favourite passages were usually marked by a leaf or a blossom of some odoriferous plant; and the geraniums which he picked up and replaced had been newly culled. "Is she taking a lesson of Emma?" he said; and the train of thought which this simple incident gave rise to, was far from being agreeable.

Throwing the little volume aside, he arose, and was looking for something different, when a noise near the door interrupted his occupation. He turned round, and, to his infinite surprise, beheld Miss Percy, who, having entered the room, sank down upon the nearest chair, and sobbed aloud. Taken by surprise,

and forgetting all but the distress thus witnessed, he was in a moment at her side, and entreated to know the cause of her sorrows. Nor was he aware of his indiscretion, till, raising her eyes with an expression not to be mistaken, she cried, "Alas! I dare not, cannot tell you, though I came here to consult you—to ask your advice—to open my whole heart as I would to a brother!"

"And as a brother, dear Miss Percy," he answered, catching gladly at the term, "I shall with pleasure and with gratitude receive your confidence. But you tremble; you are cold as marble; come nearer to the fire, and dry up these tears. My fair sister has to learn, before she states her case, that we lawyers are of the stoic school, and never suffer feeling to get the better of judgment."

"Alas!" cried Alicia, "I have not one minute to stay; all communication between us is forbidden!" and she burst into a fresh passion of tears.

"Believe me," said Cameron, "I do not wish

for a confidence which circumstances may wisely, perhaps, preclude me from sharing, but as your oldest and most intimate friend,—as one deeply impressed with gratitude both to yourself and Lady Percy."

"Talk not of gratitude," interrupted his companion: "it is a word I cannot hear. Are we not indebted to you for all the happiness of this house? Was it not miserable during your long absence? Oh, Cameron! could I but express what I came here to say, and feel that your directions were guiding me, I should be less miserable!"

"Directions, dear Miss Percy, I have no right to give; and if my advice may not be sanctioned by your mother, of what can it avail? While enjoying so much liberty myself, I selfishly forgot the restraint from which you suffer, and that time in this dull city, deserted as it is in summer, must pass heavily indeed. But the season is not yet too far advanced: change of air and novelty, even for a few weeks, might still be advantageous both to yourself and Lady Percy."

"Change of air!—novelty!" reiterated Alicia. "Oh, how little do you comprehend my feelings! yet how difficult—how impossible—for me to explain them!"

"While unhappily out of favour with Lady Percy," said Cameron, calmly, "I dare not persevere in soliciting a confidence which it seems she so strictly forbids. It is truly painful to witness your distress—to be prohibited from sharing it—to know that I have offended, and to be kept in ignorance of my offence. You, dear Miss Percy, have, in this respect at least, one great advantage; and if Lady Percy's requisitions are not very difficult, and can possibly be complied with—"

"Complied with!" she cried. "Oh, how can you be so cruel? How can you suppose it possible? Would you have me consent to marry Lord Headley, and sacrifice myself contrary to every feeling of my heart?"

"And can Lady Percy really contemplate such a sacrifice? Can she indeed espouse Lord Headley's cause—the man whom she has heard

you ridicule a thousand times! It seems to me incredible—absurd! You, so young, so rich, so—in short, Alicia, I do not think your mother can be in earnest."

"She is too much in earnest," sobbed Alicia: "her heart is set upon this horrid marriage. All this day has been spent in argument. I have been expostulated with, entreated, even threatened. But it shall never be!—no, not if I were to die ten thousand deaths, and lose all I love for ever. If I could but bring myself to confess her reasons for this strange perseverance—the cause to which she attributes my disobedience—you would pity rather than condemn me: indeed I feel assured you would.

"It is impossible to condemn a resistance so natural," he answered. "Lord Headley has little to recommend him but a coronet, and that Miss Percy may command at any time."

"I want no coronet," sighed Alicia; "and it is very hard upon children when parents cease to be consistent. My mother used to say that, the Percy baronetage being in abeyance, rank

was the last thing desirable for me; and as Percy Hall is so fine a place, with so large a property annexed, I flattered myself that she was equally indifferent upon the score of fortune. Indeed, Cameron, when I reflect on much that she used to say, it is almost impossible to refrain from accusing her of wilfully misleading me. You may remember our former conversations also, for she never refrained in your presence from speaking on the subject."

"I recollect sufficient to be convinced that her sentiments are entirely changed since Lord Headley's suit receives encouragement. Captain Campbell would better have suited her former views. Of a noble family, and a younger brother, he might have represented Sir Robert Percy with propriety. Did she not influence your rejection of the gallant Captain?"

"It never came to that. My mother discouraged him from the commencement. He is now differently engaged."

"And was not Miss Percy a little hurt for her handsome admirer? and would obedience

be so difficult were he now in Lord Headley's place?"

"How can you ask me such a question? Is it possible I can be so much mistaken? Do you really imagine him to be the person I could wish my mother favoured? But I am a fool to trespass on you with my troubles, and beg pardon for this unreasonable occupation of your time."

So saying, she arose with an air of extreme pique; but Cameron, much as he dreaded to prolong the conference, could not suffer her to depart in anger.

"My dear Miss Percy," he said, "I cannot permit you to go impressed with an idea that I am ungrateful for so kind a confidence. Heaven knows that I could with delight make any sacrifice, but that of honour, to restore your comfort. This trial is a hard one, still it is but a trial. Lady Percy, I admit, does not cede her own opinions readily; but give her time, and they will yield. Courage upon your part—a respectful yet steady adherence to the denial you have so good a right to utter—above all, the appear-

ance of a calm determination, will effect what you so much desire; and I trust the time may shortly come when some one not unworthy of Miss Percy's love, nor objectionable to her mother, shall present himself, and be approved by both."

"It is easy to preach patience while the heart is at ease," returned Alicia, her cheeks glowing with resentment. "My mother is determined; so am I. She gives me but an hour to make up my mind to an alternative that will render me wretched, though not so wretched as compliance. But it is little matter! it is no concern of any one but myself." She continued, again bursting into tears, and snatching away the hand by which he had detained her—"Cold advice, and cold assurances of brotherly regard, are all the miserable get who meanly sue for sympathy!"

In the next moment she was gone, nor did Cameron a second time attempt to prevent her going, for by so seasonable a retreat he obtained relief from a situation of very great embarrassment.

## CHAPTER VII.

" Whate'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled
By the great King of Kings.

SHAKSPEARE.

ATTACHED to Miss Percy only as to an amiable sister, Cameron's time had always been too much occupied to allow leisure for observing that she cherished towards himself sentiments of a warmer character; and feeling that he stood alone amongst his fellow-creatures, with a name which he hardly dared appropriate to himself, much less bestow upon another, the love of woman was not one of those favours for which his young heart panted. It was therefore with deep humiliation and sincere

regret that he admitted the fact just brought before his eyes. Could any thing be more degrading than the light in which Lady Percy now regarded him? than the reception he had met with from her? That reception was now accounted for: she questioned his honour—she taxed him in her own mind with the basest ingratitude; and that he was actually innocent, afforded him but little comfort, since she who knew him best believed him guilty.

But sorrow and humiliation were soon dispersed by feelings of a sterner cast; and resentment for the injurious suspicions entertained of himself was considerably aggravated by abhorrence of the tyranny practised upon Alicia. Never had the disadvantages of a mean or doubtful parentage been brought so forcibly before him. Here was age, unsightliness—all that could render matrimony distasteful to one so young and so disinterested, about to be forced upon her acceptance, merely for the sake of placing an insuperable barrier between her and the nameless being whom she generously preferred.

What cruelty! what injustice! both in the past and present conduct of Lady Percy. She had braved the too probable consequences of an unwise hazard, and now sought to remedy the error, reckless of her daughter's peace, by an expedient as harsh as it was hateful.

"Could she not," he cried, "have trusted something to her long experience of my principles? Could she not have warned me of her disapprobation?—have taxed me with my supposed presumption, and given the generous, though mistaken girl, time and opportunity to find out that there were thousands more worthy of her regard? No; she would rather condemn me unheard—substitute Lord Headley as an alternative—perpetuate the misery of her only child, than have recourse to candour, and confess herself in error.

He did not love Alicia; he had never thought of her, as he was suspected of thinking, and would with transport have bestowed her upon Captain Campbell, or any other object of her preference; yet he was not the less indignant with Lady Percy for her violent repug-

nance to his supposed attachment, nor less hurt by the means which she adopted to counteract it.

"What am I," thought Cameron, "that she fears me so much? and how despicable must be that origin which places me below the level of Lord Headly?"

A long and perplexing reverie succeeded this last interjection. He took from his pocket-book a small fragment long treasured there; it was part of a letter addressed by his old tutor to Lady Percy, the only token he had ever found that in any way reverted to himself. The words "maternal tenderness," words to which he had never yet been able to apply a meaning, now seemed impressed with one of the most painful import. His heart beat quick, his cheek was flushed, new lights appeared to flash upon his darkness, he paced the room with rapid strides, pursued by countless recollections, which like so many witnesses, rose up in evidence of a hastily conceived suspicion. Was it possible that he had any nearer claim

on Lady Percy? Could her extreme reluctance to satisfy his inquiries, her unaccountable agitation whenever the subject of his parentage was renewed, proceed from a guilty consciousness?"

How soon in an excited mind does that which at the first was no more than phantasy assume the form and substance of embodied truth, while doubts amount to certainties. As Cameron asked himself these mortifying questions, the explanation which he had so long sought in vain seemed all at once accorded to him; and summoning his courage, he pertinaciously collected every corroborating circumstance, recalling many passages of his life; the pains taken by that mysterious person named 'nurse,' to impress him with a dutiful submission for his protectress; the charges which he had received to abstain from tormenting her with questions; being told that his father had died abroad, while of his mother there was nothing positively asserted. Lady Percy, he often heard, had spent ten years, previous to

her marriage, on the Continent; his birth-place was Germany; there were nine years difference between the ages of Alicia and himself; and above all, he had been kept in the back-ground and rather scantily provided for during Sir Robert Percy's life. It did not appear that the husband of his benefactress had ever been united with her in the pious office of succouring an helpless orphan: but it was very clear that, while he lived, her succour had been given from a distance, most probably in secret. Immediately upon her widowhood, she had removed from England into Scotland, received him into her family, and bestowed upon him the most liberal education.

There were also many little incidents hitherto forgotten, but which, when now revived and brought together, served as links in that strong chain of evidence, the validity of which he could no longer doubt. Alicia had been on one occasion so severely reprimanded for calling him brother, as to cost her bitter tears. Lady Percy had grievously affronted him by the un-

necessary hauteur with which she denied that the slightest trace of likeness existed between himself and his young playmate. Numerous other trifles were remembered of a similar tendency, all bearing upon the same point; until it only remained a matter of surprise that 'the who' and 'what' he was, should have been so long a secret.

If one or other of his parents was yet living, is it likely that he should be thus entirely given up? Or why, if both were removed from the scene of former shame, should that in which he was so deeply interested be so pertinaciously held back. Alas! it was but too plain that she who felt the shame had not the courage to avow it; and after a sad and lengthened colloquy, he came to the painful conclusion, that Lady Percy had the strongest personal motives for preserving a rigid silence.

Nor were his conclusions either harsh or unnatural;—for however hazardous such concealment; however dreadful might be its results; however strange that she, awake of course to

every fear, should not see with trembling the first symptoms of Alicia's unhallowed susceptibilities; there was that in Lady Percy's character—the temerity of whose ignorance exceeded, if possible, the pride of her self-love—which was enough to justify his suspicions.

Sole guardian of her daughter, she had undertaken all the responsibility and all the labour, rather than consult with those who might entertain an opinion at variance with her's; and thus accustomed to have every thing her own way, she dreamed not of failure in schemes the most absurd, or of opposition to commands the most unreasonable. Yet despite the amplitude of her power, she ever sought to gain her ends by a devious rather than a straight-forward road; and vain of her talents for manœuvring, became such an adept in the art of deceit as frequently to deceive herself.

"Any thing rather than the truth," ejaculated Cameron, when he summed up his painful evidence; "any expedient rather than a confession so humiliating; even Lord Headley, even the

sacrifice of Alicia. Thank God, that I have never felt for thee, unhappy girl! otherwise than as a———" brother, he would have said, but the word was arrested ere it was breathed. He could not speak it: a burning shame glared on his face, his temples throbbed in agony, his heart was bursting; he shuddered at the apprehension of what might have been his suffering, had he shared in the sentiments of her whom he now called sister; at the idea of again beholding her to whom, in his despair, he gave the name of mother.

"Miserable woman!" he cried, "with so much self-sufficiency — so much daring, to what a state of mortification are you now reduced! How terribly is your presumption punished, even in your feelings towards myself! Those dreadful feelings, rendering me at once an object interesting to your heart, yet hateful to your sight, whom you dare not neglect, but whom it is guilt and shame to cherish!"

To fly the house immediately—avoid another meeting with Alicia—a repetition of that ter-

rible avowal which she had all but spoken, and from which his heart recoiled, was Cameron's first and very natural impulse. Nor did the abandonment of Edinburgh, of his professional hopes, of every thing to which he had long looked forward, appear the slightest sacrifice, when put in competition with the pain of remaining where he was, and suffering all that he must suffer. But, next to his apprehensions of a similar scene to that which he had so lately witnessed, was his anxious desire of saving Alicia from a participation in his misery—from the horror of feeling as he felt toward the parent, whom, however difficult to obey, she ought still to honour; and might not the flight he meditated, so abrupt, and so impossible to account for, betray its real motives? and might not she, knowing as much of his history as was known to himself, be equally acute in developing its mysteries? Could he then, by a precipitate departure, and for the sake of avoiding some painful hours, run the selfish risk of awakening in her mind the same miserable suspicions which he himself entertained, and of poisoning every fu-

ture hour of her life? Oh, no; yet how command himself to meet Lady Percy? how see her in whose possession the shameful secret rested, without betraying that it was known? He was a poor dissembler; and would she not stand confessed before him in her real character? Would not his eyes, when raised to hers, express what passed within his bosom? Alas! no filial feeling would she there discover, no soft affection that might mitigate his horror of the crime to which he owed existence.

He threw himself upon a sofa, and pressed his burning forehead on the pillow. He heard no sound but the loud ringing of his ears—the wild throbbing of his temples. A cold hand was laid on one of his: it was Alicia Percy's. He started up, and shuddered as he retreated from her touch.

"What is the matter, Cameron?" she inquired. "You look ill; your candles are unsnuffed; your fire nearly out; your hands are burning. My mother unfortunately asks to see you, and I have just stolen here again to beg you will not say that I was here before.

I dare not acknowledge to have seen you. Alas! you do not heed me; for pity's sake, be kind, and promise silence!"

"I do—I do," he cried impatiently, "and will obey Lady Percy presently. But go to your own room, Alicia; go, I entreat you."

"You are ill, indeed you are," she observed with tenderness. "Pray, think not of my mother; excuse yourself from seeing her; she is herself all nerve and agitation. Oh, Cameron! if any thing that I have said affects you thus, forget it, I beseech you; and believe that I would not for worlds cause you the slightest pain."

"My head does indeed ache," sighed Cameron; and he pressed his hands over his eyes; "nevertheless, I must go to Lady Percy; she inquires for me, does she not?"

"Yes, but not yet; she has not sent; she does not expect you yet. You are too much flurried, too ill to attend her; she will know that we have met."

But Cameron heeded her not: a *tête-à-tête*

with Lady Percy, however appalling, lost half its terrors when contrasted with that from which he flew; and in the hurry of his spirits he forgot that he was not yet summoned, until his hand had turned the lock of her dressing-room door, and until it was too late to recede; besides, he was pursued by Alicia's soft, imploring voice, and without time for other care than to escape from it, he found himself in the presence of her whom a few minutes before he had determined to fly from for ever.

Starting, and turning quickly round upon hearing a footstep, her eye glanced, as he thought, confusedly from him to a small packet of papers that lay open on the table, and which, while pointing to a chair, she hastily collected and deposited in a drawer. There was a long and awkward silence; she seemed to be contending with some disagreeable repugnance; and for him, had life depended on his being the first to speak, he could not have articulated a single word.

"I sent for you here," she at length began,

"because it becomes absolutely necessary that we understand each other upon a very painful subject; one which I would, if possible, have ever avoided, but which though late—"

Here the eager earnestness of Cameron's fixed gaze, the anxious, breathless avidity with which he listened, checked her progress, and turning a little pale, she hesitated for a few moments, but recovering herself, she changed her style, and adopting that of the interrogatory, again went on.

"But is it necessary that I should make this mortifying disclosure in due form? Are you so entirely without suspicion? Have no new lights broke in upon you lately? Do you really believe that no feelings warmer than those of merely platonic friendship?"—He covered his face with his hands,—"You are aware then?—I have nothing to disclose—so far, at least, humiliation is spared me!"

Cameron, in whose pre-occupied mind there was room but for the one idea, could answer only by a deep ejaculation. For the avowal he

had been in part prepared, but not for the utter heartlessness of her who made it; and it was therefore with less of consideration than of bitterness he brought himself to acknowledge that new lights had indeed been given him; and that the 'who' and 'what' he was no longer remained a secret.

Lady Percy grew pale as death; her lips parted as if to answer, but no sounds issued from them—every limb shook as if in a fit of ague; her eyes were fixed on Cameron with an expression of terror which he could not for his soul encounter after the first killing glance; and had the guilt been all his own, a deeper blush could not have visited his cheek, or a sadder consciousness have overspread his intelligent face than when he constrained himself to proceed—"I feel aware that you are about to give me the information I have so long fruitlessly requested. But let there be no unnecessary exculpations; enough that I am the child of those who cannot acknowledge me in honour. Alas! there's little else that it in-

terests me to know. I have now no wish to bear my father's name, but am ready to quit Edinburgh—to fly, not my legitimate country, for I have none, but the country of my hopes; provided that Miss Percy is not sacrificed; that she participates not in the unhappy secret which must for ever rest between us two."

While with indescribable emotion he thus gave utterance to his feelings, Lady Percy fixed her eyes upon him in astonishment. But their expression of terror vanished ere he concluded; the colour returned to her cheeks, and though her lips still trembled, and her voice was thick, she made an effort to assure him, that it was no part of her intention to enter upon a subject such as he imagined; a promise having passed between herself and those most concerned in the secret which he so vainly sought to penetrate. "It is for a very different purpose," she continued, recovering her usual tone, "that you have been summoned hither. Feeling myself deceived—that this attachment,

which Miss Percy confesses to have formed for you—"

"Pardon me, Madam," interrupted Cameron, "but you have not been deceived, neither by Miss Percy nor myself. Of her sentiments I do not presume to speak, not having the honour of her confidence. Of my own, let me assure you——"

"Allow me to interrupt in my turn," said Lady Percy quickly; "I was going to say, that Alicia acquits you of a premeditated design upon her affection. Still you cannot, Cameron, plead ignorance of having won it. Having given you that affection, it is impossible but so young and so innocent a creature must have betrayed herself! Permit me to proceed — I was of course put in possession of her sentiments when Lord Headley proposed himself — no one can suppose that I meant to use my authority in the disposal of her hand. But Lord Headley is a person of rank; his fortune, though embarrassed, justifies him in seeking any alliance; and his character,

though gay, is, I understand, strictly honourable. Added to this, it was an opportunity to try whether her professed attachment to you could withstand a little opposition, the perseverance of such a suitor, and the allurements of a splendid debut in society. I wished also to save her a severe mortification. In all I have been deceived and disappointed. The heart of a guardian should steel itself to every generous impulse; but such is not my nature, and bitterly do I now deplore my heinous self-indulgence. Alicia is humiliated and unhappy, she trembles at the mere prospect of seeing you again—and after the avowal she has made to me, confesses it were better that you should seek another home."

"Heaven forbid that I were capable of any other thought!" cried Cameron, who imagined he saw through Lady Percy's plan of banishing him without assigning the real reason. "You are safe! perfectly safe, Madam—I am innocent of seeking an interest in Miss Percy's favour, either directly or indirectly, and fervently

thank my God that I can say so. The disgrace of my birth shall cease with myself; for my determination to sustain singly through life the stigma of bearing a name to which I have no legitimate title, even the merit of Miss Percy, or the wealth of India, would not tempt me to swerve from. I could with less contrition have robbed the traveller upon the king's highway, than your daughter of the name to which she is by law entitled. You therefore are safe, perfectly safe," he continued, in accents of passionate feeling. "Would to God I had been banished sooner; the horror, the degradation of this interview had then been spared us both."

"For pity's sake compose yourself," said Lady Percy; "you know not what you say. Who spoke of degradation? who told you that your birth was illegitimate? I never did, I could not. My guardianship of Miss Percy has been incautious—my adoption of yourself imprudent—but in both I should have been unpardonable, had your birth been a mystery

to me. Cameron, *we* do not banish *you;* neither is it because you are unworthy, but because Alicia is too sensitive, that I sought to change the current of her fancy."

"Merciful Heaven! can this be true?" ejaculated Cameron. Then after a short silence, addressing Lady Percy, "Speak it once more, my dearest madam, my generous preserver—speak it once more distinctly, and I will ask no other question. Tell me that my mother was not disgraced — that my father was not a villain!"

Here his emotion totally overcame him; the suppressed resentment, the terribly sustained suspicion, were both removed, and his agitation found relief in a burst of natural feeling. The noble heart surcharged with sorrow and indignation was softened in an instant, and tears suffused his manly face, as, with Lady Percy's hand clasped in his, he listened to the brief but precious sentence which followed his irresistible appeal.

"Your parents were united in wedlock: your

father was an honourable gentleman, and your mother a virtuous wife. But both are long since dead; and yourself, as I have often told you, destitute of inheritance. If any of your relatives survive, they are not in a situation to do you service; and circumstances of a painful, though not of a dishonourable nature, render a mutual recognition impossible. Those who so cruelly deserted your infancy, did they now live, would not more willingly acknowledge you. Be satisfied your birth was not disgraceful, though it must remain a mystery; and whether your father's name was such as you are called by is of slight importance,—would signify nothing, if the sentiments my poor dear child has so unfortunately cherished were returned on your part; for by Sir Robert Percy's will, her husband must assume the honourable name of Percy, and, if a commoner, revive the ancient baronetcy."

Cameron was indeed satisfied: he asked no farther. All he most desired to know was comprised in that one sentence, which assured him

that his father was an honourable gentleman, and his mother a wedded wife. He thanked Lady Percy again and again, and blessed her in his heart that she was not what he had feared. He felt that he could never sufficiently atone for the unworthy suspicions he had dared to admit; and had she offered herself to his acceptance, instead of her young and interesting daughter, it is doubtful if his gratitude and his contrition would have suffered him to reject the boon.

Ignorant of his recent feelings, and of the misery which her explanation had so suddenly removed, Lady Percy could only attribute the rapid revulsion of his spirits, and the warmth of his thankfulness to one cause. At that moment she did really believe him attached to her daughter. Perhaps at that moment she first knew how to estimate the blessing of power as a means of bestowing happiness; for, selfish as she was, it could scarcely be possible for one human being to witness such a change in the appearance of another without some participation. Cameron's expressive countenance, his

fervent ejaculations, though little more passed his lips, assured her how much he must have suffered, and how greatly he was relieved. Nor did she suspect, until some time afterwards, how slightly he estimated the good she was about to bestow, in comparison with the evil which she had just removed; or that her acquiescence in her daughter's wishes was only valued as a proof of his legitimacy.

Cameron was now fully alive to the kindest impressions; and in the first moments of excitement there was no sacrifice he would not have made to Lady Percy and Alicia. Disinterestedness was a quality calculated to gain his esteem, and the latter had proved herself truly disinterested. The delicacy of his own feelings made him peculiarly sensitive for hers. He recollected, even with tenderness, the artless avowal she had all but made to him; and when her mother sent him to her, the most apprehensive lover could not have approached the object of his hopes and fears with more humility and respect.

Alicia was the happiest of the happy. She saw at her feet the man with whom, in the leisure of her unoccupied hours, she fancied herself deeply in love. That he partook of her sentiments she never doubted; that he was humble, and therefore hopeless, she was equally sure; while the awe with which she believed him to have been inspired, and which accounted for his dulness, gratified her vanity, and flattered her self-love.

From that moment an engagement was formed that had every appearance, but little certainty, of a favourable termination. Alicia had gained her point; her joy was full, and she had nothing left to hope for. Cameron was relieved from a cruel apprehension; his worst fears were at rest, but he had attained that for which he had no desire, and which, the first overflowings of gratitude exhausted, he very nearly repented having accepted.

Misled by the excitement of an agitating disclosure, by the relief that it occasioned, and by her apparent generosity, he saw in the first ex-

position of Alicia's affection only the artless confessions of an inexperienced girl, from whom fear and oppression had wrung the dearest secret of her heart; and had she been gifted by observation, it might have taught her, from the increased respect of his manner, how much she had risked in suffering that secret to escape. But an idea which possessed her mind, of being long and silently loved, was too pleasing to be easily relinquished, and the gratification of elevating so timid a lover in his own opinion too flattering not to be indulged. Cameron, whose heart responded not to such warmth, rather shrunk from than encouraged that tenderness, and, without analysing his motives, was as zealous in all former pursuits as if his prospects had undergone no change. Apparently forgetting that the riches which ere long should be his own, must place him beyond the necessity of exercising his profession, he was every day attaching himself to it with unabated ardour. Was it that he doubted the fulfilment of his engagements—the sincerity of Lady Percy? or

that he sought, amid the pursuits of literature, for something to fill a heart indifferent as yet to those emotions so natural at his age, yet conscious that its pulses, though dormant, were still strong?

Whatever might be the impulse that directed his conduct, that conduct pleased not either Lady Percy or his affianced bride. The former soon gave him to understand, that zeal in business-like occupations accorded but little with his new position; was disrespectful to herself, and insulting to the generosity of her daughter; while Alicia, who would not willingly have hurt his feelings, teazed him by selfish demands upon his time. Nor was he suffered to forget for a moment that liberty, one of the possessions most cherished in anticipation, and ever valuable in proportion to its scarceness, was parted with for a species of aggrandizement not by any means assimilating with his ideas of independence.

When considering his young companion only in the light of a sister, Cameron had given

himself small trouble in the investigation of her character. Silent, and apparently compliant, there was little in her either to approve or condemn; and the warmest interest she then excited was pity for the restrictions under which she laboured. When, however, to know her better became important to his future happiness, the investigation increased neither his affection nor his respect, for her mind was a waste which had never been cultivated; a sort of blank which he found it impossible to fill. If possessed of ideas, she knew not how to express them; if of feelings, they were (except in the one instance of passion for himself) never exhibited, and even that passion had nothing in it of an elevating nature. She was, however, by no means unamiable; and had Lady Percy been fitted to form her disposition, to cultivate the good, and exterminate the evil propensities of youth, Alicia might have grown up an ornament to her sex. All that Cameron could venture to hope arose from his conviction of the mother's errors; and all he could do was, by kindly yielding to the half-

formed and often erroneous opinions of his future partner, to gain her perfect confidence, and take his own time in furnishing her mind with something more to be depended upon than the consistency of an attachment which had originated in idleness, and which was, though oppressively exhibited, so purely selfish.

Wearied by the exactions of Lady Percy, teazed by Alicia, and panting to breathe once more the air of freedom, he recollected with pleasure his promise to visit Drummond, in that beautiful retreat of which he had merely taken a passing glance; and breaking off from the trammels of home, he arrived at the Corrie-glen in order to justify Drummond's reliance on his promise, and to recommence an acquaintance with those whose influence had power to colour with various shades of light and darkness the most interesting passages in his future life.

Having now given an account of our hero, the reader is requested to return and meet him in the peaceful seclusion of the Corrie glen.

## CHAPTER VIII.

" An union of the soul they prove,
But must not think that it is love."

IN the habitation of his new friends, Cameron witnessed the happiness which results from unambitious views, and is little indebted to temporal advantages.

To Drummond he had been attracted from their first meeting. Their opinions were similar, their characters not unlike. But he was not so engrossed by the society of his accomplished host as to be insensible to merits of a still more fascinating kind: Mrs. Drummond all softness and sensibility; her daughter, so deservedly the object of parental love, animated, sensible,

and accomplished, yet modest, dutiful, and gentle—uniting the spirit, talents, and noble bearing of her father, with the tenderness, beauty, and feminine graces of her mother—refined in her tastes, simple in her enjoyments, the companion of her parents, their all of love or of interest. Her countenance was radiant with happiness, and there was joy in the very tones of her voice. Her step was as light as her temper was buoyant; affection heard it at a distance, for it was ever the harbinger of delight.

To a creature so attractive, and rendered more so by the seclusion in which she was found, Cameron could not be long indifferent. Forgetful of his chains, charmed with his freedom, he yielded without fear to the most pleasurable emotions of his life, and indulged the warmest admiration for Ellen Drummond: watched her every movement with the tremulous enjoyment of one who fears that a beautiful illusion is about to escape him, and scarcely dared to breathe while she spoke, lest

he should lose a syllable of those observations which equally delighted him by their artlessness and good sense—until a letter from home, by recalling the past, warned him of his danger; for it came not without pain,—and the conviction that there was a world to which he must return beyond that peaceful glen, threw the first shadows over a scene, the brightest and the happiest in which he had ever been included. He instantly bade adieu to his friends, resisting with equal firmness the artless regrets of Ellen and the hospitable entreaties of her father, and hastened from the Corrie glen with a promptitude which betrayed its motive, and a vain hope that the power of volition and the effects of distance might change the current of his thoughts, and banish from recollection the Lanarkshire cottage, and its too amiable inhabitants.

But Cameron would have been wiser had he fled before flight became so painful, and before he discovered, that forgetfulness, of all practical lessons, is sometimes the most difficult to learn.

For, however resolute in regard to the future, he now felt a repugnance to meeting with Miss Percy, which he could by no means overcome.

No less pleased with him than he had been with them, the recluses of the Corrie glen mutually lamented the departure of their intelligent guest.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Portia.*—A quarrel—ho, already! What's the matter?
*Gratiano.*—About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose poesie was
For all the world like cutlers' poesie,
"Love me, and leave me not."

CAMERON returned to Edinburgh trusting in his own firmness—in his resolution to abide by engagements, to which, however repented of, he was bound both in honour and in gratitude,—for he believed in the inviolability of Miss Percy's attachment to himself, its tenderness and its consistency. He had, however, yet to learn, that a mind which has never been suffered to reason, to judge for itself, or to exercise its own powers, will rarely prove consistent.

That of his betrothed, requiring excitement to fill up its vacuity, stood in need of a perpetual stimulant; for opposition, if not the parent, had been the nurse of her passion for him. She loved him, but her love was of that uneasy, unsatisfied description, whose pains exceed its pleasures, and which, depending upon pungents for its existence, requires to be kept in a state of constant effervescence. Her conquest had been too easily effected. She repented having betrayed her real feelings, was far from enjoying that perfect bliss which she imagined was to be hers when every impediment should be surmounted, and sought to create difficulties for herself. He was too much of a friend, too little of an adorer—by much too secure. She longed to excite his fears, to try the strength of his affection by making him doubtful of hers, to play the play over again, and introduce an under-plot of doubts, stratagems, jealousies, and so forth.

In conformity with such a scheme she received him coolly, constrained herself to behave

with a reserve which, coming too late, assumed the semblance of caprice, and had, in return, the mortification to perceive that such reserve awoke no resentment, called forth no fears; that, perfectly at ease, he met her coolness with serenity, and treated a petulance which she was but too conscious of betraying, with the mild forbearance of a considerate friend.

It was a critical moment for Alicia Percy; and had she but sought to win his heart with half the pains which it cost her to lose his good opinion—had she, instead of playing the coquette, and treating him as she would have done a heartless dangler, studied his character, and formed her own by it—in the end the conquest might have been hers; for he struggled hard to do her justice—to look upon her errors with indulgence—to gain her confidence by bearing with her follies—to share her thoughts, and to direct them aright. Above all, he tried to feel towards her as he had felt before his visit to the Corrie glen; but she was no longer artless and affectionate as then; and, despite his utmost efforts, that

sweet and peaceful spot was seldom absent from his memory. In the bustle of business, in the retirement of home, its attractions were too often in his thoughts. He languished for the spirited conversation of Drummond; he sighed for the radiance of Ellen's intelligent face—for the soft smiles of her mother. He compared the splendid fortunes of Lady Percy, her artificial wants, and unreal miseries, with the refined enjoyments of his Lanarkshire friends. He would also have compared the rich and high-born heiress of the one with the portionless daughter of the other; but honour forbade the comparison, and when it would force itself upon him, he resisted it with a courage the most praiseworthy and self-denying.

As the affianced husband of her daughter, Lady Percy, under the pretext of making Cameron acquainted with her affairs, was continually tormenting him with consultations upon matters that might, with more propriety, have been confided to her steward; while subjects of importance were carefully kept out of sight;

and often, while engaged in business of the utmost consequence to his reputation as a lawyer, or to the interests of his clients, was he subjected to interruptions of the most teazing, because of the most trifling nature. Added to which, her ladyship's plan of life was changed. She now entered into company which had been hitherto shunned, her doors were opened, and Miss Percy was suffered to appear in public to receive and to make visits: upon all which occasions he was required to be her escort.

The appearance of so rich an heiress in the gay world of Edinburgh had been looked to with anxiety by many who composed its higher circles. Known by report as pretty and accomplished, her mother had been blamed and commented upon for keeping her so much in the back-ground. But Lady Percy, disliking the society of a place where she had voluntarily fixed her residence, for the same reason that she would have disliked society in any other spot, namely, because she could not rule it, was always too ill or too nervous to encounter night

air or heated rooms: and as it never occurred to her that any set of people could take the liberty of accounting for her conduct otherwise than as she pleased, so a practical lesson was necessary to teach her that peculiarity never escapes remark, and that those who choose to deviate from general practice must make up their minds to brave both censure and suspicion.

"Your plan of life is completely changed, Alicia, since I was last at home," observed Cameron one day, when called upon to escort her in some visits; "and to you who have so few occupations the change must be desirable."

Miss Percy's answer was couched in conformity with the part she was then enacting.

"It is a most agreeable change. I should have expired with *ennui* had this winter been spent like the preceding; 'twas enough to give us all the vapours."

"I do not yet understand," inquired Cameron, "to what influence such a change is attributable?"

"To a libel, in the first instance, and, secondly, to Lady Julia Luscombe."

"A libel! Methinks I should have been consulted. But, it seems, a fairer advocate has carried the point. What was the libel?"

"Why, some middle-aged ladies, in cloth pelisses and dowdy bonnets, accompanied by a young man with lank hair and a pale face, waited upon my mother and requested her patronage of a school, or subscription to a meeting-house; and she found out that these persons thought, because we lived so recluse, that she was methodistical. So Lady Julia persuaded her that the only way to refute so injurious a suspicion would be to enter into company, and let me attend balls."

"Very judicious of her ladyship. But how came Lady Percy to consult her? I should not have thought such advice likely to prove influential."

"Oh, you do not know Lady Julia; she is very charming, no one can resist her. You will acknowledge all this when she returns to

town: it is a fortnight to-day since we have seen her; but to-morrow she is expected, and when in Edinburgh we are almost always together."

"I am delighted to hear it," said Cameron.

But Alicia did not look at all delighted that he should say so; however she went on. "I shall be so happy to-morrow; every thing seems so different when Lady Julia is here, I feel in such good spirits, and mamma is encouraged to go everywhere."

"She must be a very charming person. And your praise makes me also wish for her return. Pray is not her ladyship the near relative of a certain Captain Campbell?"

"They are cousins," said Alicia, deeply blushing. And here the conversation dropped.

There had sprung up between Miss Percy and this most admired and fashionable person, a very sudden, and, to all appearance, a very warm friendship. She was a niece of Lord Headley's, and previous to his rejection, and through his means, had been introduced to

Lady Percy. Her ladyship was one of those attractive young persons whose fascinations it was impossible to withstand: and who, with a good deal of self-conceit, and no small portion of pride, could, when occasion required, accommodate herself to all tempers. Far from resenting her uncle's dismissal, she had ridiculed the vanity of his pretensions in confidence with Alicia; and by every polite and high-bred deference to the prejudices and peculiarities of Lady Percy was become leader in her cabinet. Her good-humour and vivacity added a life quite reviving to the few hours now spent at home, and Cameron was less surprised at the influence she attained, than at the trouble she took in attaining it. In common with others he admired her beauty, and was amused by her wit; added to which, he felt very much her debtor for a good deal of relaxation, when, acting as his substitute, she took Alicia Percy off his hands.

The latter, meanwhile, distinguished as a beauty and an heiress, was surrounded by attention, and assailed by flattery. Of nice

partners, and fashionable danglers, she had sufficient choice. Nor was so fair an opportunity to be lost of awaking some fears in the stoical bosom of him who still remained her first object, by the use of that ready weapon jealousy: one which she, like others of her sex, found it a much easier matter to wield than wound with. But the game played was in her case highly dangerous; she knew little of the mind she would have subjugated—its feeling, its delicacy, its truth.

Unlearned in the arts of coquetry, not at all conversant in the stratagems made use of in amatory warfare, Cameron gave his fair assailant credit for a sincerity which she did not deserve, and began to suspect that admiration was teaching her to value her own advantages; and that her unsought affection for himself was yielding to the allurements of more brilliant, and, perhaps, warmer suitors.

Lady Julia had a cousin, the same Captain Campbell whose attentions to her daughter, Lady Percy had quashed at their commencement.

Handsome, gay, and agreeable, professionally a soldier, but practically a besieger of the fairer rather than of the hardier sex; his manners, when he pleased, peculiarly insinuating; and as he was ambitious of universal conquest, he was less likely than others of so high a grade, to respect Miss Percy's engagements. It was said by the latter, and believed by her mother, that he entertained a predilection for his lively cousin, and when together in private, (for he had gained the *entrée* at Lady Percy's,) his attentions were very like those of an admirer. But in public, when the Duenna's eyes were elsewhere engaged, he appeared solely occupied by the heiress; and Cameron could not but suspect that the pains these accomplished cousins were at to conciliate Lady Percy, their success in securing her favour, had other and deeper motives than merely friendship for a young person so little qualified either by talents, education, or habits, for companionship with them, as was Alicia Percy. She seemed, however, to profit by the example continually

before her eyes: Campbell talked nonsense better than any other person; his common language was that of gallantry, and she, still adhering to the same plan, rather encouraged than repressed such flatteries. Cameron was no inattentive looker on: a joy, a hope, he dared not indulge, yet could not entirely repress, was filling his heart as he made these observations, and tempting his wandering wishes to transgress the bounds prescribed to them.

He united with Lady Julia in promoting every pleasurable scheme, encouraged Miss Percy's apparent liking for amusement, entered into all her enjoyments, was perseveringly good-tempered when she would have provoked him, and particularly urbane to all her distinguished favourites.

She was piqued beyond endurance, angry with him, dissatisfied with herself; and had her affections been valuable, he never was more in danger of losing them than at the close of that gay and agitating season. But her engagements were known and respected by those

whose merits might have rendered them dangerous as rivals, and from the influence of fashionable partners and carpet heroes such as Campbell, she was tolerably safe; for her taste had been formed upon too perfect a model to lose its first impression by a few months' contact with frivolity; though, wayward as a coquette, she encouraged the assiduities of seeming rivals for the sole purpose of alarming him, whom to conquer and to secure was the object of her girlish schemes and secret machinations.

It was with the utmost reluctance that Lady Percy persevered in a course of dissipation so much at variance with her former habits; but the fear of appearing to sanction any thing like religious austerity, of which, indeed, she had been suspected, induced her to comply with the advice of Lady Julia, and the wishes of Alicia seconded by Cameron, until her health did actually give way; when, sending for the family physician, he (perfectly understanding her wishes) prescribed rest, and immediate removal

into the country. Cameron was commissioned to seek for a villa in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and one happening to be vacant within a distance not quite unapproachable for Dr. R—— (a matter of no small importance to Lady Percy,) furnished, aired, and affording the necessary accommodation, it was hired for six months, and preparations set on foot for a removal into quieter scenes.

Miss Percy, upon the first intimation of so abrupt a change, looked as she really felt, exceedingly mortified. Not that she grieved for the gaiety about to be forsaken, so much as for the total failure of her assaults upon the impenetrable security of her frigid lover, and for the abandonment of those opportunities by which she still hoped to have aroused his fears or to have excited his jealousy.

In a very few days the whole family, including their elegant visitor, were shivering in a country villa, of which the papered grates and book-muslin window-curtains alone indicated that summer was night at hand. Lady Julia,

furred and shawled as if it had been Christmas, complained not, although perishing with cold. She braved the north-east wind, was in raptures with her first trial of rural life in the budding month of May, and submitted to Lady Percy's selfish and obsolete customs with infinite good-humour and gracefulness. Campbell soon followed; and the pains which he was at to conciliate Lady Percy—his adroitness in securing her good opinion, and the *entrée* to her house, neither of which were to be had without their price—the apparent content of himself and Lady Julia with her antiquated customs—the dulness to which they condemned themselves—their exertions to dissipate that dulness—could only be accounted for by ascribing to those worldly-minded cousins a joint and well-arranged attack upon the heiress's affections, which, if successful, might well repay even so self-estimated a Cavalier for his temporary conformities.

"Lady Julia's penetration," thought Cameron, "has long since discovered the exact na-

ture of my sentiments for her young friend; and she therefore considers, that by furthering the views of a relation, no breach of faith is committed! He did not know that, forbidden by her guardians to admit Campbell as a lover, which in fact she was, her ladyship had no opportunity of meeting him except in public, when their intercourse could not fail of being observed. An intimacy with Miss Percy afforded her the facilities which she dared not seek in a house more resorted to by general company. Their frequent meetings in so safe and so unobjectionable a place, exposed them to little risk of suspicion, and her friends, anxious that the report of so imprudent an attachment should not gain ground, had taken great pains to deny that such ever existed; so that the circumstance was even unknown to Cameron; and Alicia had her own reasons for not imparting what she knew.

The spring circuits were now at hand, but a great deal of opposition on the part of Lady Percy preceded Cameron's departure in order

to meet his professional engagements. Alicia looked and felt exceedingly out of temper; nevertheless he broke away from all such home annoyances, to enjoy with more than common pleasure the delightful, though often dangerous re-action of free will and liberty upon a generous mind.

## CHAPTER X.

" O, sweet are Coila's haughs and woods,
Their lint-whites chaunt among the buds,
And jinkin hares in amorous whids
Their loves enjoy:
While through the braes the cushet croos
Wi' waefu cry."

HAD Cameron followed the bent of inclination, he would have hastened to renew his acquaintance with the Corrie glen, immediately upon the close of the circuits; but liberty, while it had the effect of reaction upon his spirits, did not go the length of breaking bounds and outstripping the suggestions of prudence.

Until released in word, as in deed, from

every previous tie, honour and discretion forbade an indulgence which might possibly be attended with disappointment. Within a few miles of gratifying his wishes, he had the courage to resist them; and turning his steps elsewhere, put in practice a long meditated design, that of an excursion into Aberdeenshire. In spite of Lady Percy's discouragements, and her repeated assurances that inquiry would avail him nothing, he still cherished an ardent desire to become acquainted with the history of his parents; to ascertain his own position, and her motives for persevering in a silence no less harsh than extraordinary.

His matrimonial arrangements, and the positive rank to which he would in consequence be raised, had, to a certain extent (by filling his mind with one decided care,) dulled the edge of painful curiosity. But now that he was again to be cast upon his own exertions for the establishment of a name—that he had no longer the severe discipline to undergo of struggling with a deep, though suddenly conceived, and forbidden

passion—that the privilege of seeking happiness in his own way was likely to be accorded; all his anxiety returned to penetrate a mystery that might possibly interfere, though other barriers were removed, to frustrate his dearest hopes.

A little scrap of written paper, found among some school-books, part, as it seemed, of a letter addressed to Lady Percy by his former tutor, and containing (as before-mentioned) the words "maternal tenderness," was all the evidence in his possession of any correspondence between these, his two earliest, and, by all accounts, only friends. Some other might exist, even oracular, where he had resided during infancy; for Mr. Cameron's old housekeeper still lived, and occupied the rather humble habitation of her late master, which, with a small yearly stipend, his goodness had secured to her.

Often did Cameron wish to revisit that well-remembered home, for the sake of having an interview with Hester Gillespie. She could neither read nor write, and his communications

with her were restricted to visits, "few and far between," with the factor of an Aberdeenshire laird. These had, however, ceased, owing, in truth, to Lady Percy's secret orders, though he attributed the failure to a less premeditated cause, and for several years he had received no token of remembrance from one who, however humbly so, had been to him a kind teacher of good, in days when frolic and mischief were much more to his taste than Mr. Cameron's exercises. Remembrance of Hester and her friendly stripes, were not, however, his only reasons for taking advantage of the first opportunity to put in practice this long thought of, but hitherto frustrated journey. She might probably have heard something of those who first placed him, an infant, under the care of Mr. Cameron. She could not forget a tall disagreeable woman, who used to make an annual visit to his guardian, and who, in afterwards carrying him from Huntly, and placing him at school, acted under the direction of Lady Percy. This woman could doubtless tell much, withheld from his

knowledge by her employer; and, once in possession of her name and place of abode, he would leave nothing undone toward the discovery he had so much at heart.

Crossing the country from Glasgow through the beautiful shire of Perth, he entered Aberdeenshire full of expectation; and forgetting, in the distance between himself and home, those every-day restraints that thwarted his purposes while there, he wondered at and blamed the compliance which had prevented his undertaking the same journey long before, and for the same purpose.

His youthful buoyancy returned as he approached the happy residence where affection had presided over his early years; and which was now recollected with almost the same exhilaration as had urged his boyish speed when, following the beat of an indulgent guardian, his recklessness of danger, eagerness for sport, and sparkling beauty, had called forth the rude admiration from many a moorland passenger.

The step of that guardian was no longer

before him upon the wild, but the very air of those heath-scented moors, the sight of that venerated river, awoke in Cameron's bosom a reviving influence. He left his horses within ten miles of Huntly, and walked forward alone, that he might try if his memory would serve to find out those cross paths and short cuts once so familiar to him, and which had been often conned over in his mind's eye, as the map which a child is getting by heart.

Evening was falling, and wreaths of smoke were accumulating in one dense cloud over the town. "I shall just be in time for Hester's social tea-pot," he said to himself; "with what hospitable pleasure will she add to its usual quantum a few more spoonfuls of 'the Deacon's best,' and spread that little table in the ingle-nook, where I have so often appeased the cravings of my boyish hunger!" and Cameron actually felt some warnings of that keen appetite with which he used to inhale the fragrance of grilled beef or savoury broth, when, returning from a long morning's chase, he sped on before

the greyhounds and their still vigorous master, impatient to seize a morsel in the kitchen ere Hester's cookery could reach its destination in the parlour.

"These were happy days," sighed Cameron; "and why? I was unacquainted with luxury; I fed coarsely; I was clothed roughly. My tasks were sufficiently difficult; but—I was loved; and as soon as those tasks were over, I enjoyed the liberty so dear to every human creature. What I felt was fearlessly expressed. Taught to love virtue rather than dread reproof, I learned to stand in awe of my own disapprobation before the disapprobation of others. Excellent being!" he continued, as he stepped over the low churchyard wall, and found himself at the grave of his benevolent old master. "Excellent and pure-minded being! if ever mortal had a foretaste in life of that communion now enjoyed by thee, it was thyself! Charitable, humble, thankful; still pressing on towards heaven; with less of earthly dross to encumber thy straight-forward path than millions of com-

petitors, thou hast surely reached the goal in safety!"

His desire to partake of Hester's hospitality was forgotten as he stood beside that lonely grave, and deciphered the inscription upon its modest headstone, which merely set forth the day and date when Alexander Cameron, an episcopal clergyman, had exchanged a life of privation for an eternity of bliss. At least so said the sculptor, and it would be infidelity to doubt his truth.

The sight of a stranger in the kirkyard attracted the notice of some children at play in an adjoining field, who immediately mounting the wall took a nearer survey of the "grand gentleman." But the object of their curiosity looking about, they scampered away; and the report was instantly afloat that "some ane past common, the Laird of Lessendrum, for none other could he be, was stannen glowering at auld Maister Cameron's grave-stone." As if by mutual and immediate consent, the population of Huntly seemed to turn out, and his progress

was impeded by many a courteous reverence. For several minutes he flattered himself that he had

> "Found again a welcome home;
> And thought of auld-langsyne."

But no familiar face met his with looks of recognition, and he felt, as he really appeared—a stranger. The sparkling rosy boy of eleven years old could scarcely be identified with the elegant gentleman of twenty-eight, even in the hearts of those among whom he had once been a favourite. His memory was not, however, quite so treacherous: Jean, an old woman who sold snaps and sugar-stick at the corner of the Minister's close, a name applied for the time being to the narrow street in which Mr. Cameron lived, still occupied a seat in the same spot. Her little table, placed in the same position, and furnished with the same tempting refections which had drained his coffers fifteen years since, recalled so forcibly those times when she formed his chief attraction, that he actually felt in his waistcoat-pocket for the

oft-sought penny, ere he recollected that the age of wiped sugar-stick and dusty gingerbread was long gone by. The penny was exchanged for half-a-crown, and the demand for "sweeties" into a kind inquiry after the old wife's health. But Jean had lost her hearing. She arose respectfully, and rattling a little wooden box, the receptacle of all her copper, and pointing to her store of cakes, shook her head in token of possessing, neither in goods nor coin, the value of his silver piece. The half-crown was quickly exchanged, and pressing a guinea between her withered fingers, Cameron hastened through the close, and found himself before that door whose latch, when last he raised it, his little arm could hardly reach without the assistance of a stepping-stone.

He felt assured that Hester would not fail to remember him. But when he reached the kitchen, Hester was not at her accustomed post, either to fulfil or disappoint his expectations.

A little imp-like looking thing, the caricature of female ugliness, stooped over a few newly-ignited

peats, and stirred a mess of porridge, her face more fiery than the blaze she puffed at, and her eyes, which almost started from their sockets at the sight of such a visitor, like two red hot cinders, seemed as if they had scorched the frizzled and flame-coloured locks that half concealed them. Such was the being who now filled a place he little dreamed of seeing so strangely occupied, and who, instead of the anticipated welcome, received him with an exclamation of wonder and affright.

A short survey of the altered and comfortless apartment sufficed to convince him that his poor friend no longer laboured in her customary vocation; and he had no other expectation but of hearing that she had followed her old master to the grave, when he ventured the inquiry from that strange creature who stood staring at him, motionless, wild, and as if fascinated by a basilisk.

"Ben the hoose," she hoarsely muttered, without moving a muscle, but the fore-finger of her right hand. He followed its direction, and es-

pied through the vista of a half-open door, the apparently sleeping figure of a female, stretched upon a low bed, in the room beyond.

"Is she ill?" he asked; but the sibyl had vanished.

"It is a melancholy change!" ejaculated Cameron; looking towards the half-open door, and again surveying the sloppy hearth, the dingy pewter which yet garnished a few dusty shelves, and the deep drapery of cobwebs that was suspended from the ceiling. But his soliloquy was interrupted by the girl's return, accompanied by a woman whose appearance was rather of the better sort.

This person having replied to his inquiries after her own fashion, by putting a few questions to him herself, and being satisfied that he was a friend of the invalid, and had come on purpose many miles to visit her; he in return was informed that the poor old housekeeper had been blind for nearly four years: that the Laird of Lessendrum, in consequence of this misfortune had generously added to

the annuity secured to her by Mr. Cameron, with the house rent-free for the remainder of her life; as, being obliged to relinquish her gains in the way of lodgers, her means became considerably reduced. Her circumstances, therefore, in consequence of the Laird's generosity, were comparatively easy, but deprived of sight, and dependant on the services of an hireling, her once neat dwelling had degenerated into a mere comfortless hovel; and from activity beyond her years, she had sunk into habitual stupefaction.

"She aye sleeps," continued his informant, "particularly in cauld weather, and barring a wee drap tea, it 's leetle the body cares for."

"She sleeps now," returned Cameron, "and it is too late this afternoon to think of disturbing her. I will remain at the Inn until morning, when perhaps she may recognise me. Does her memory still serve?"

"Oh, her memory, Sir, is nae the waur; she talks o' naething but by-ganes; an' is wonderful quick wi' her ears, kenning ae-body by their speech. Wha shall I say is speering after her?"

"No matter; I will announce myself to-morrow." So saying, Cameron left the house, and sped his way towards the Inn. Chilled at heart, and disappointed, he was not sorry to lose sight, even for a few hours, of that sad change, which first death, and then infirmity, had wrought in an abode that reflected, as it often was, in the sunshine of early recollections, had gleamed across his memory, like a beam of light upon the dark and distant ocean.

A tolerably good supper, a tolerably clean room, and a blazing fire, for though nominally summer, a cold northern wind whistled through every aperture, and drove clouds of dust along the street, revived his spirits; and fatigue soon supplied him with the best of all possible anodynes. He slept soundly, and being fortified by a breakfast of highland manufacture, still more abundant than his supper of the preceding night, he set forth in somewhat a more cheerful mood to make trial of old Hester's memory.

She was sitting in her large chair by the kitchen fire. The house was 'red up' and 'a' things' in order to receive a visitor.

"Here 's te unco," said the little maid, whose shining face, fresh scowered like the floor and scarcely dry, and whose smoothed locks proved that even such as she was not, upon some occasions, insensible to the advantages of appearance. Hester attempted to rise, but Cameron taking her hand, begged her not to move. Although blind, her eyes were not totally devoid of intelligence, and he thought that something like a light passed over them while he spoke.

"I am grieved to see you thus, my good Granny," he said, using the familiar appellation of former times; "though you cannot recognize the person, perhaps the voice of an old friend may not be quite forgotten."

'Tis nae ither than yer ain sweet voice, my dear, dear bairn;" cried the affectionate creature. "Blessed be his name!" she could say no more; her sightless eyes were full of tears;

and her tremulous accents were impeded by sobs.

Cameron spoke soothingly to her while she wept, and murmured her thankful ejaculations. She pressed his hands to her lips and rubbed them between hers: "Let me feel if your bonnie curls are still the same," she said, and he guided her almost transparent fingers to his head.

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Progressing slowly homewards he returned toward Edinburgh by a circuitous route, dwelling much upon the precariousness and mystery of that strange situation in which he was placed. Without name, home, relative, or fortune, yet all within his grasp, the first wish of his heart was to be relieved from the obligation of receiving them, if that might be called a

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MRS. HEMAN'S.

IT was very late at night when he entered the city; and, directing his steps to an hotel, rather than to Lady Percy's house at that unseasonable hour, it was not till noon the following day that he thought of proceeding to the Roslin villa.

That spot, however, toward which many an anxious as well as hopeful thought progressed, he was not destined immediately to see; for on the flags of Princes-street there stood a countryman gaping about, stopping the progress

of every passenger, and inquiring for "Ane Maister Cameron, Advocate."

A mutual recognition was the consequence of this oft-repeated question being addressed to the very person for whom inquiry was made; nor did many minutes elapse ere Douce Davie Jardine, tenant in the Corrie Glen, was commodiously seated in the lawyer's study, while the latter received the following rather unsatisfactory answer to his eager inquiries for the health of Captain Drummond and family. "The leddies are weel, Sir, that's tolerably weel conseedering; as to the lave, God's will be done. But it's na the laird's fault, or Miss Ellen's either, that I did not seek ye sooner; for ye see the bit plea that's brought me here a' this wearisome gate, has fashed us sairly, and been a stumbling block an' a hindrance baith to my worldly concerns an' the Christian-like ruling o' a factious spirit. Them deevil's o' writers at Lanark—nae disparagement to yoursel, Sir, or ony gentleman o' the Parliament house,—ha ta'en awa the pickle

siller that our Jean aye locked i' the kist towards making a whig propounder o' our Jemmie, who has a yearning an' call to the ministry, but he 's liked, poor laddie, to haud the plugh rather than the Beeble; for, as our guid wife says, and she 's nae without a foreknowledge, there 's nae making a Whig o' our James wanting siller. Howsever, let that bide; for, as Miss Ellen made an observe, when ye passed through Lanark, and gaed us the go by, 'We hae all our disappointments to bear, Davie. Ye did wrang na to seek him at Glasgow,' quo' she again; 'twould hae na been so far, and you sure o' guid council at the hinder end.'"

"Then it is in compliance with Miss Drummond's suggestion that you have sought me at Edinburgh?" anxiously inquired the advocate.

"I 'm just telling you, Sir," said Davie, who, taking out his mull and refreshing himself with half a dozen pinches, the interval between each pinch occupying not less than two minutes, would have exhausted the attention of a less practised listener. But Cameron, in the habit

long dead to a' the beautiful sights o' this changeable world, will hae a clearer glimpse o' the glory that shall be revealed in anither. I am aye contented, my bairn, for I ken that a's for the best."

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proportion as his corporeal powers failed, his spiritual energies increased. His mind, rich in its natural endowments and in the splendour of its attainments, soared above bodily disease; and was only exceeded in the sublimity of its views by the cheerfulness of its endurance.

Tender to those he loved—regardless of self—during hours of excruciating pain, the wife for whose sensibility he trembled, and the child upon whose strength he leant, were not pierced by a single groan. And when time and distance intervened between Cameron and that afflicting scene, it would daily and hourly present itself before him: the tender wife making her unavailing efforts, but sinking with the loss of that support to which she so exclusively clung; the child, so loving and beloved, trembling, yet struggling with her terrors, witnessing death for the first time, yet, moderating by the kindest endearments, by the most strenuous exertions of her gentle influence the despair of one parent, and soothing, by the pleasure with which he beheld her pious labours, the

last moments of the other, whose listless head sank upon her duteous bosom till its weight was agony; and whose cold hands were stiffened within hers, before one sob of anguish was suffered to escape.

## CHAPTER XII.

"Thou wilt return, and feel thy home more dear;
More dear the Muses' gentler influence,
When on the busy world with wisdom's smile,
And heart uninjured, thou hast gazed the while."

When Cameron, with the assistance of the parish minister, had consigned to the grave all that remained of him so lately known and so highly valued, there were many arrangements to be made, and much to be regulated even in so confined an establishment, that the experience of Ellen could not possibly effect; and, in the performance of which she had no aid except from him.

In Mrs. Drummond's present state of wretchedness she was without even the semblance of

parental care; and though Cameron's very looks were disciplined, and no one word of all he felt was suffered to escape, Ellen could not but be sensible that he regarded her with sentiments warmer than those of friendship. A slight but a perceptible reserve began to take place of that unembarrassed confidence with which she had treated him, while protected by the sacred presence of her dying father; and he, neither dull nor unobservant, could penetrate the cause and understand her feelings long before they were understood by herself. He knew that the admiration with which she inspired him could not be entirely concealed, and his anxiety to secure her esteem, to inspire her with the fullest reliance upon himself was, if possible, increased by that instinctive delicacy which, while it held him at a distance, redoubled the value he set upon her favour.

Fully comprehending her thoughts, he believed that the right course for him to pursue would be that of a temporary estrangement; and that his absence would not be displeasing.

"And where is the letter?" eagerly asked Cameron; "have you lost one a second time, or did Miss Drummond not give it you?"

"She 's sure no' to send me on a fule's errant," said Davie, unbuttoning first one and then another garment; "she 's sure to gie me a token mair or less." And at length, from an under waistcoat's inside pocket, he drew a small brown paper parcel, carefully secured by many a yard of packthread, crossed, recrossed, and knotted in its several quarterings; all of which knots Davie would have leisurely untied, had not Cameron cut short his operations with a pen-knife. The letter then slipped out, and while Davie carefully unpicked the knots, and restored the packthread to nearly its original length, the former perused his letter.

After modestly but earnestly requesting to see him again, and stating, with perfect simplicity, the strange claim set up to disinherit her, Ellen continued thus:—"Of my dearest father's correctness in every action of his life there cannot be the slightest doubt; so that my

only uneasiness arises from apprehension of my poor mother being under the necessity of seeing this dreadful man, whose very appearance would terrify a spirit not borne down by grief as hers is.

"I have merely told her that a person upon law business called here this morning, and that taking advantage of your kind injunctions, should we require assistance, I have sent to solicit your return. She was exceedingly distressed that you should have left us without seeing her, and desired me to say, that for your sake she will move into the dressing-room to-morrow; so that what at the first view appeared so shocking may turn out an unexpected benefit, provided Davie Jardine reaches Glasgow in time, and that such a trial of your patience be not altogether unreasonable."

"Sweet Ellen!" thought he, "gentle but strong-minded being! how nobly does she sustain this inhuman attack! how honourable to her father is the faith she reposes in his correctness! Yes!" he said aloud, "I will in-

stantly obey her summons. For you, Davie Jardine, both yourself and horse require rest and refreshment. As to the nefarious proceedings of this rascally claimant, we shall quash them with a word. I have proof in my possession of Captain Drummond's marriage; but I doubt, when he hears that Miss Drummond has legal assistance, if we shall see him again."

"Lord's sake, Maister Cameron! ye 'll not let him off without a prosecution? I 'd stretch the law any day to punish such a villain."

"We 'll get rid of him as soon as we can, Davie. Miss Drummond would not thank us for connecting her name with such a business, so the less that is said on the subject the better."

"Weel, weel, I 'se sorry for it. But since yourself and Miss Ellen taks it so quiet, it 's all the better that I'm clear of an assault. Them tight pockets are gude counsellors whiles, and our Jean is no without her share o' rationality."

So saying, Davie repaired to the bar, where, in consequence of Cameron's directions, he fared most sumptuously at a small cost; and

finding the landlady tolerably well disposed to listen, so long as liquids were necessary to whet his tongue, he forgot his promise of riding with the advocate till the latter had proceeded some miles. Had there been hope of chastisement for Miss Drummond's enemy, he would have redeemed his promise at the expense of his jaded horse; but as this was not the case, evening overtook him in the streets of Glasgow, about the same time as Cameron came within view of a spiral wreath of smoke which issued from between the oak trees overshadowing the Corrie Glen.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt,
So full—that feeling seem'd almost unfelt.

LORD BYRON.

HE should see her daily, almost hourly, again. The presence of a parent would sanctify their intercourse, and any little services which, deprived of that presence, she had shrunk from accepting, would not now, as latterly, be rejected.

Mrs. Drummond was laid upon a sofa in the dressing-room, where she had been removed a short time previous to Cameron's arrival; but overcome by the exertion, she had fallen into a sleep. Her face was turned towards the fading

light, and he could perceive how thin and pale it had become, scarcely distinguishable from the borders of her widow's cap. One hand, which lay outside the coverlet, was equally wan and emaciated; and her whole appearance so wofully altered, that he would not have recognised her in any other place.

Kneeling down beside the sofa, he pressed with his lips that cold pale hand; then, unable to restrain his emotion, or conceal the shock thus suddenly inflicted, he arose, and rushing into the garden, indulged his anguish alone and unwitnessed.

For what appeared to him a considerable length of time he paced his weary walk uninterruptedly; but ere a quarter of an hour had actually elapsed, Ellen herself came out to seek him, and as they approached each other, he had time to remark the sad change which even in a few days she had also undergone. Her person was almost attenuated, and not a trace of colour remained upon her face: she held out her hand, and attempted to apologize for having so

long neglected him; but tears rushed to her eyes, and her words were so low as to be scarcely articulate. Cameron gazed upon her with the tenderest commiseration, besought her to be comforted, and forgetting the restraint hitherto imposed upon himself, ventured farther than he had yet done in making her sorrows his.

Overcome by the loneliness of her feelings for the last few days, by the absence of that support to which she was now restored, by the conviction that she was indeed dear to him who was every thing on earth to her, Ellen yielded to the tenderness of her overflowing heart, and listened, for the first time in her life, to the soft whisperings of a lover; while tears, not alone of sorrow, fell fast upon her throbbing bosom. There were no vows exchanged, no explanations required. With respect to the sacredness of her sorrow, and to the peculiar delicacy of their relative situations, he rather intimated, than declared, his passion; yet their hearts were in those few precious moments avowed to each other, and when she found

words to say that her mother was ready to receive him, he led her to the house as sure of having won her young affections, as if her lips had ratified their silent compact.

From Mrs. Drummond, subdued as she was, and a prey to unresisted grief, he received the kindest welcome; for having been dear to the beloved partner whom she mourned, he would have been dear to herself on that account alone, if possessed of no other recommendation.

There was a total want of reliance upon her own strength, an habitual dependence on that of others, in the character of the interesting invalid; a sensitiveness, and a tenderness in her disposition, that claimed a kind support, which common pity could not deny to one so gentle, while sympathy was more than repaid in the soft gratitude by which it was acknowledged. Accustomed to draw all her happiness from the inexhaustible depths of affection, her soul thirsted for the commiserating friendship of Cameron, and their first painful interview over, his presence became necessary to her peace.

She leaned upon his strength as upon that of a son, and those violent paroxysms of grief, that terrified the apprehensive watchfulness of Ellen, soon ceased to be so frequent. She wept indeed as much, or more than ever, but it was a quiet and exhausting effort, which sometimes subsided into sleep. For Ellen, however, there was no relaxation; still self-engrossed, the mother's otherwise kind heart perceived not the sorrows of others, and Cameron witnessed with increased admiration the patience of that duteous child, the unwearied tenderness with which she devoted herself to the too long unrequited task of soothing a grief as deeply felt by her, though not so selfishly indulged, and the judicious piety with which she used an interval of calmness to lead her mother's thoughts beyond the temporary ills of life, till they rested upon the "light that shineth into eternity." He aided her in these her pious labours, and received the sweetest reward for his co-operation, in a smile of thankfulness, whenever the dear object of their

mutual solicitude appeared to receive his attention with less than her usual apathy.

Mrs. Drummond seemed to have forgotten the legal consultation which Ellen had assigned as a reason for recalling Cameron; nor was it needful to remind her of it, for the expected interloper came no more. Perhaps the presence of such an adviser at the cottage deterred him from appearing there; at all events, the chance of such an appeal afforded Cameron pretext sufficient for remaining at his post to refute it. It was however now, he thought, quite time to answer Lady Percy's letter, and to account for his failure in the best manner that he might be able; it was still more necessary to relieve Miss Percy's mind, and restore her to liberty, happiness, and health. He could with truth aver, that the fulfilment of so unequal a compact had from its commencement appeared doubtful to him, and set at rest her generous scruples by stating, that well founded hopes of professional success left him without fears upon the score of fortune.

not see with indifference such a prospect of happiness open to her deserving child, or be insensible to those maternal solicitudes, the most interesting and the most anxious that a parental heart can feel.

Opening her eyes to the ravages which sorrow and watchfulness had wrought in the person of Ellen, she imparted her apprehensions to Cameron, and begged him to lead her out into the open air, to revive, if possible, her former healthful pursuits, and her interest in domestic cares. She even so far contended with her own antipathies, as to admit once more into the apartments whence it had been so long excluded, the reviving warmth of the summer's sun.

Cameron, now in daily expectation of the important letter from Edinburgh, only waited its arrival to lay open every thought of his heart to those who so nobly confided in him. Ever at Ellen's side, he lived in the hope of meeting a return of his love.

"But Happiness," says Experience, "is never without alloy;" and he, in possession of

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appearances which had favoured his self-deception.

"When we formed this unhappy contract," he said, "she was yet ignorant of her own high pretensions. Secluded from the world—treated as a child—but feeling as a woman, she fancied herself attached to me, because there was no opportunity of judging by comparison. Since then, opportunity has been given her; she has learned to value herself; listened to adulation; and entered with all the avidity of an unoccupied heart into the pleasures of high society. Lady Percy's assertions appear very positive, she probably believes them well founded; but I am still of opinion that my influence is over, and that were our fortunes reversed, Alicia would be the first to give me back my liberty. Mistaken, however, as well as generous, she hesitates to rob a dependant of those brilliant prospects, with which in a moment of excitement her partiality endowed him; and believes that she is acting with the virtue of a heroine while immolating her happiness at the shrine of

constancy. Why then, dearest Madam, should I not persevere in releasing her, and prevent a sacrifice equally destructive to us both?"

"There was no sacrifice when the voluntary gift was accepted," replied Mrs. Drummond. "There is no change in Miss Percy since her heart was given to you, but that which your too sanguine wishes extort from your imagination. Lady Percy asserts the contrary, and condescends to explain away your doubts. I cannot discredit her; and I feel—ah! how I feel for her daughter! How natural the pride that would, though late, conceal her unrequited tenderness! How pitiable!—And what must have been her conflict while assuming that estrangement? What may she not suffer at this moment?"

In short, Mrs. Drummond's commiseration was reserved for Miss Percy alone; and, true to the feelings of her sex, the deserted woman obtained that compassion which was denied to the unstable and ungrateful man. At the same time, she abstained from the slightest

reflection upon Cameron. He had looked for pity, if not for aid, and he could not resign without another effort the hope of exciting her interest.

"God is my witness," he said, "that when the influence of Miss Drummond's excellencies were first felt by me, I fled from them on the instant; nor was the temptation again encountered, until Alicia Percy became an altered person, and gave me every reason to believe that the chain which she had voluntarily assumed was any thing but a pleasant burden. The delusion, if it is one, increased every day. I witnessed her evident encouragement of another; nor can I yet believe that her indifference, so well assumed towards me, has not its foundation in reality. Alas! if you, dearest Madam, judge my cause so harshly, and refuse to intercede for me with Miss Drummond, how is her forgiveness to be obtained?"

"Ellen," said Mrs. Drummond, "has nothing to forgive, having received no injury, and can only be offended by the supposition

that she needs apology." Then, as if eager to change a topic so personally delicate, she reverted to Lady Percy ; inquired if there were other daughters, and spoke of Sir Robert as having inherited his estates from Lady Gertrude Percy's husband. " Sir William," she added, " was a kind old gentleman, and very indulgent to young persons. He gave me once some holidays at Percy Hall. I was but ten years old, yet that magnificent place made a strong impression upon my memory ; for the time I spent there was quite a jubilee. Too soon, however, was it changed into a house of mourning. My uncle died of grief for the loss of a sweet infant whom he had adopted ; and my twelfth birthday saw, instead of the fête which I was promised, his widow's return to her brother's house. She was obliged to give up Percy Hall ; Sir Robert took possession, and we never saw it more."

At another time, Cameron's curiosity would have been immediately awoke to inquire something more about persons in whose former pro-

ceedings he felt the most vivid interest; but Mrs. Drummond's manner of receiving his communication had dealt him a blow from which it was difficult to rally; and the constraint which she put upon herself, while emotion quivered on her lip, and trembled in her voice, created alarm for her strength. A most inauspicious silence was at length broken by Ellen's entrance. She called for lights, arranged the table, and, with a sweet activity peculiarly her own, was giving a look of cheerfulness to all around, when a deep sigh from her mother suddenly interrupted her occupation.

Mrs. Drummond had struggled till totally overcome, and ere Ellen could reach the sofa was extended upon it in a swoon. The hapless girl hung over her senseless mother in silent terror, while Cameron, bitterly upbraiding his inconsiderate selfishness, supplied restoratives. In a few minutes the sigh was repeated,—the languid eye was raised—and the look which he now shrank from, fixed deploringly upon him-

self and Ellen. When able to speak, she desired to be taken to her own room. Ellen required Cameron's assistance, and with the wretched feelings of an unwelcome intruder, he for the last time supported thither the interesting invalid.

A servant presently brought tea, with Miss Drummond's excuses; and Cameron, left alone throughout that solitary evening, knew that no choice remained for him but immediate departure from the cottage.

Mrs. Drummond did not sleep during that night, and though she feigned to be at rest, the watchful child was well aware of her unceasing wakefulness. But no entreaties could prevent her rising to breakfast; and Cameron, who felt too keenly why such an exertion was attempted, beheld with dismay those ravages that one night's renewed agitation had made in her appearance. He dared not, as before, express his fears, or try to lighten Ellen's cares by participation. He saw the pale face of the latter assume the same anxious expression as during

her father's illness, but not now, as formerly, did it turn on him with confidence.

While yet at the breakfast table a letter was brought to him. He broke the seal with a palpitating heart, for the direction he well knew to be in Lady Julia's writing. Glancing at its contents his features brightened; the whole expression of his countenance was changed; he was in the act of handing it to Mrs. Drummond, when her deadly paleness alarmed him. She looked as if trembling between life and death,—as if the slightest emotion would annihilate her for ever; and while dubious whether she really possessed enough of the vital spark to sustain her for another minute, he dared not venture to break the fragile spell that yet united her to earth.

Again he cast his eyes upon the letter, when Mrs. Drummond's feeble voice recalled attention to herself, and she rather breathed than uttered the following sentence of banishment, while Ellen glided from the room.

"Your summons to leave us has, I suspect,

arrived. We shall feel very lonely; but your friends have the strongest claim. They have been very kind to us already."

Cameron walked to and fro in the room without speaking. The self-denial was severe which prevented him from imparting to Mrs. Drummond the intelligence just received. But he scarcely comprehended it himself. It boded every good, yet it was of too vague a nature to rely upon entirely. He dared not add to the excitation already visible in her damp brow and glassy eye by making her a partner in any new perplexity. He repented bitterly of having so far disturbed her, and materially as his situation might be altered since the unfortunate conversation of last night, he determined to bear all its miseries rather than risk an acceleration of that already fluttering pulse. There was a long silence, but it was not in her nature to persevere in coldness. She held out her hand, and her voice shook as she said—

"I am very sorry; you have been every thing to us in our bereavement—"

He pressed her feverish hand with fervour to his lips, and hesitated whether he might not, thus encouraged, impart to her the contents of that which almost went the length to give him back his freedom; but prudence fortunately interposed. He still pressed her hands in his, and tears fell fast upon them. A heart less susceptible must have partaken in his distress: hers could not behold it unmoved. She wept for him, and with him, and, when able to articulate, she urged him in language which it was impossible to resist, that he would leave the cottage without entering into any explanation with Ellen. Cameron the more readily acquiesced in all she said, because contradiction at such a moment might be fatal, and because he hoped that a happier explanation was not far distant.

In the presence of the mother he took leave of her child, and hurried away in order to shorten a scene too painful for the feelings of all, and which Mrs. Drummond had scarcely strength to get through.

As soon as Ellen could collect her ideas, or

recover from the surprise of Cameron's precipitate flight, she was agonised by fears for the health of her drooping mother, who sank under the disappointment of her hopes. For several posts she inquired after letters, and anxiously examined the pale face of her lovely nurse as these inquiries were answered in the negative. But the ceaseless efforts of the latter, (whose selfish regrets interfered not with acknowledged duties,) her affection, and the energy of her well-regulated mind, succeeded in lulling maternal solicitude even till she was suspected of being unaccountably indifferent to merit such as Cameron's.

But Ellen was truly a sufferer; and though the claims of duty, and the avocations of a responsible situation proved strong but bitter auxiliaries in assisting her to contend with disappointment, this disappointment was not the less deeply felt.

Perhaps, in the first moments of its infliction, she did not entirely despair, for the young heart is not crushed at a blow. She might

cherish expectations of his return, yet he came not. One letter of tender inquiry, after the lapse of some time, was all the communication she received from him; and she was left alone and unassisted even by the illusions of hope, to brave the desolations that threatened her, and to see her only surviving parent and friend fade away like an autumnal flower. She suffered herself to be the prey of dejection, till wan and colourless, her wasted form became more like the shadow than the substance of a living creature.

## CHAPTER XV.

" Poor mortal man in ev'ry state,
What troubles and what ills await!
His transient joy is chased by sorrow,—
To-day he's blest;—a wretch to-morrow."

WHEN Cameron looked back upon the Corrie Glen, and saw it in all the beauty of a summer morning smile upon his retreating steps, he could view the calm scene without despair, for he held a paper in his hand that gave him the blessed assurance of a speedy return.

It was the letter received but an hour before, and which had in every way accelerated his movements. No wonder that his spirits were lighter, and his steps more elastic, as he walked

to the nearest village, and re-perused the following propitious fragment:—

*Copied from a Morning Paper.*

" Edinburgh, ——.

" This morning, between the hours of twelve and one, a travelling chariot was seen to enter the city from the Roslin road, and we have since ascertained that its speed was occasioned by the anxiety of a lovely fugitive to escape parental tyranny, and to reward with her fair hand the gallant companion of her flight, an accomplished son of Mars, who thus proves himself a hero in the arts of captivation. This affair is likely to create a lively sensation in the higher circles, and among the gentlemen of the long-robe, one of whom, report hints, has been rather remiss in his duties," &c. &c.

As the paragraph, copied in Lady Julia Luscombe's hand-writing, was without date, merely enclosed in a blank envelope, Cameron could not be certain when this most delightful event

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truth broke at once, "can this be possible?" and he darted into the next stable, where two postilions, both in a communicative state of temper, talked so loud and so openly, as fully to convince him that the first and most desirable step toward his wishes was actually taken. Direct questions those pleased conductors of a pleasant enterprise were loth to answer; but, with the aid of a little manœuvreing, he soon collected quite sufficient information,—namely, that they had been hired early in the day at Edinburgh to take up a gentleman whose carriage stood in a coachmaker's yard, where, according to appointment, they took him up about half-past eleven at night; that they then proceeded to Roslin, but without calling at any house. The gentleman was set down in a lane thickly shaded with trees, where, desiring them to remain, he disappeared, for not longer, however, than half an hour, when returning, in company with a young lady, they both got into the carriage, and were instantly off full speed,—in what

direction, Cameron's informants would not tell.

North, South, East, or West, were all the same to him. Any one point of the compass, provided Alicia sped thither in company with a more favoured swain, would equally clear his road, and he returned to the bright clean hearth—his snug seat in the ingle, the comforts of a good fire and an early breakfast, with a light heart, and right healthy appetite.

As the hour was an awkward one to proceed toward Edinburgh, and as his abrupt appearance at the villa, so early on that very morning might seem a strange coincidence, he accepted the landlady's offer of a bed; and, having ridden hard all day, and most part of the night, was soon in a sound sleep, which lasted much longer than he intended it should; so that ten o'clock surprised him ere he again set forth. But he was in no hurry to encounter the first brush of Lady Percy's passionate reproaches. Yet he pitied her, and made up his mind to suffer all that her ingenuity might devise in that way,

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her father's illness, but not now, as formerly, did it turn on him with confidence.

While yet at the breakfast table a letter was brought to him. He broke the seal with a palpitating heart, for the direction he well knew to be in Lady Julia's writing. Glancing at its contents his features brightened; the whole expression of his countenance was changed; he was in the act of handing it to Mrs. Drummond, when her deadly paleness alarmed him. She looked as if trembling between life and death,—as if the slightest emotion would annihilate her for ever; and while dubious whether she really possessed enough of the vital spark to sustain her for another minute, he dared not venture to break the fragile spell that yet united her to earth.

Again he cast his eyes upon the letter, when Mrs. Drummond's feeble voice recalled attention to herself, and she rather breathed than uttered the following sentence of banishment, while Ellen glided from the room.

"Your summons to leave us has, I suspect,

arrived. We shall feel very lonely; but your friends have the strongest claim. They have been very kind to us already."

Cameron walked to and fro in the room without speaking. The self-denial was severe which prevented him from imparting to Mrs. Drummond the intelligence just received. But he scarcely comprehended it himself. It boded every good, yet it was of too vague a nature to rely upon entirely. He dared not add to the excitation already visible in her damp brow and glassy eye by making her a partner in any new perplexity. He repented bitterly of having so far disturbed her, and materially as his situation might be altered since the unfortunate conversation of last night, he determined to bear all its miseries rather than risk an acceleration of that already fluttering pulse. There was a long silence, but it was not in her nature to persevere in coldness. She held out her hand, and her voice shook as she said—

"I am very sorry; you have been every thing to us in our bereavement—"

He pressed her feverish hand with fervour to his lips, and hesitated whether he might not, thus encouraged, impart to her the contents of that which almost went the length to give him back his freedom; but prudence fortunately interposed. He still pressed her hands in his, and tears fell fast upon them. A heart less susceptible must have partaken in his distress: hers could not behold it unmoved. She wept for him, and with him, and, when able to articulate, she urged him in language which it was impossible to resist, that he would leave the cottage without entering into any explanation with Ellen. Cameron the more readily acquiesced in all she said, because contradiction at such a moment might be fatal, and because he hoped that a happier explanation was not far distant.

In the presence of the mother he took leave of her child, and hurried away in order to shorten a scene too painful for the feelings of all, and which Mrs. Drummond had scarcely strength to get through.

As soon as Ellen could collect her ideas, or

recover from the surprise of Cameron's precipitate flight, she was agonised by fears for the health of her drooping mother, who sank under the disappointment of her hopes. For several posts she inquired after letters, and anxiously examined the pale face of her lovely nurse as these inquiries were answered in the negative. But the ceaseless efforts of the latter, (whose selfish regrets interfered not with acknowledged duties,) her affection, and the energy of her well-regulated mind, succeeded in lulling maternal solicitude even till she was suspected of being unaccountably indifferent to merit such as Cameron's.

But Ellen was truly a sufferer; and though the claims of duty, and the avocations of a responsible situation proved strong but bitter auxiliaries in assisting her to contend with disappointment, this disappointment was not the less deeply felt.

Perhaps, in the first moments of its infliction, she did not entirely despair, for the young heart is not crushed at a blow. She might

cherish expectations of his return, yet he came not. One letter of tender inquiry, after the lapse of some time, was all the communication she received from him; and she was left alone and unassisted even by the illusions of hope, to brave the desolations that threatened her, and to see her only surviving parent and friend fade away like an autumnal flower. She suffered herself to be the prey of dejection, till wan and colourless, her wasted form became more like the shadow than the substance of a living creature.

## CHAPTER XV.

" Poor mortal man in ev'ry state,
What troubles and what ills await!
His transient joy is chased by sorrow,—
To-day he's blest;—a wretch to-morrow."

WHEN Cameron looked back upon the Corrie Glen, and saw it in all the beauty of a summer morning smile upon his retreating steps, he could view the calm scene without despair, for he held a paper in his hand that gave him the blessed assurance of a speedy return.

It was the letter received but an hour before, and which had in every way accelerated his movements. No wonder that his spirits were lighter, and his steps more elastic, as he walked

to the nearest village, and re-perused the following propitious fragment:—

*Copied from a Morning Paper.*

" Edinburgh, ——.

" This morning, between the hours of twelve and one, a travelling chariot was seen to enter the city from the Roslin road, and we have since ascertained that its speed was occasioned by the anxiety of a lovely fugitive to escape parental tyranny, and to reward with her fair hand the gallant companion of her flight, an accomplished son of Mars, who thus proves himself a hero in the arts of captivation. This affair is likely to create a lively sensation in the higher circles, and among the gentlemen of the long-robe, one of whom, report hints, has been rather remiss in his duties," &c. &c.

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"Good God!" cried Cameron, on whom the

truth broke at once, "can this be possible?" and he darted into the next stable, where two postilions, both in a communicative state of temper, talked so loud and so openly, as fully to convince him that the first and most desirable step toward his wishes was actually taken. Direct questions those pleased conductors of a pleasant enterprise were loth to answer; but, with the aid of a little manœuvreing, he soon collected quite sufficient information, — namely, that they had been hired early in the day at Edinburgh to take up a gentleman whose carriage stood in a coachmaker's yard, where, according to appointment, they took him up about half-past eleven at night; that they then proceeded to Roslin, but without calling at any house. The gentleman was set down in a lane thickly shaded with trees, where, desiring them to remain, he disappeared, for not longer, however, than half an hour, when returning, in company with a young lady, they both got into the carriage, and were instantly off full speed,—in what

direction, Cameron's informants would not tell.

North, South, East, or West, were all the same to him. Any one point of the compass, provided Alicia sped thither in company with a more favoured swain, would equally clear his road, and he returned to the bright clean hearth—his snug seat in the ingle, the comforts of a good fire and an early breakfast, with a light heart, and right healthy appetite.

As the hour was an awkward one to proceed toward Edinburgh, and as his abrupt appearance at the villa, so early on that very morning might seem a strange coincidence, he accepted the landlady's offer of a bed; and, having ridden hard all day, and most part of the night, was soon in a sound sleep, which lasted much longer than he intended it should; so that ten o'clock surprised him ere he again set forth. But he was in no hurry to encounter the first brush of Lady Percy's passionate reproaches. Yet he pitied her, and made up his mind to suffer all that her ingenuity might devise in that way,

till resentment being completely exhausted upon him, he might venture to put in a word as intercessor for Alicia.

Who, in his circumstances, would not be equally magnanimous?

When he arrived at Lady Percy's town-house, and the porter presented himself at the door, he knew that the explosion had already taken place.

"How are the ladies, Andrew?" he inquired.

Andrew shook his head; "It 's no' long since the doctor's gone yonder, Sir."

"So much the better," thought Cameron; "his anodynes and his flatteries will, ere long, appease her. Disagreeable as the doctor is, there would be no living without him."

"Is your lady ill?" he added aloud, and recollecting that the story was not yet told.

"O, vera ill, Sir; for the shock last night, as ye may weel believe, or rather this morning, Sir; it was no' till aboot eight o'clock that all came out."

"That what came out?" again asked Cameron.

"The 'lopement, Sir, to be sure. Do ye no' ken o' my lady's moonlight flitting?"

"Miss Percy's?" interrupted Cameron.

"No, Sir, but my Lady Julia."

"Lady Julia? — what! — Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Lady Julia Luscombe an' the Captain: eh, Sirs! ye did no' think I meant Miss Percy? Na, na, she 's safe and weel at home, where she ought to be, as in duty bound. Weel, off they wint last night, Lady Julia and the Captain, before ony one kenned a word, or suspected aught. An' when Miss Percy got up, Sir, about eight o'clock, she rang her bell; it was answered, as they tell me, by Lady Julia's maid, who handed her a letter, and then Miss Percy, she flew to my lady's room in her night-cap, Sir, and—"

But Cameron, who had staggered for a moment, and almost lost the use of limbs and reason, unable to hear another syllable, suddenly clenching his hands, rushed across the hall, and, reaching the first open room, shut himself in and locked the door, as if, by ceasing

to hear, he could drive from his ears the dreadful truth which they had just then received, or arm himself with fortitude to sustain a disappointment so totally destructive of every hope.

But it is not in the first infliction of a desperate wound that the sufferer's pain is most acutely felt. A manly spirit will pluck from his heart the weapon of destruction, nor writhe beneath its momentary torture; he will exclaim, "The worst is over,—I can endure what is to follow!" Alas, he is mistaken! the wound is there to tell him so: at every rub it bleeds afresh—at every motion it is lacerated. Patience may prescribe — Religion may operate; but, without the aid of Time, which slowly probes, and still more slowly heals — even these powerful agents will fail to effect a cure. It was so with Cameron; he threw off that dreadful blow with the strong arm of despair. "Disappointment," he cried, "has done its worst; there can remain no greater ill in store, and yet I bear it; yes, and I will bear it. It is all of my own seeking, and I ought to bear it!"

Whatever had been Lady Julia's design in practising such a deceit upon Cameron, whether merely as a hoax, or from a deeper motive, she succeeded in furthering her own wishes, and in bringing him home to share in the confusion occasioned by her flight.

Lady Percy, who never condescended to acknowledge herself in error, except when no error existed, and whom the superior cleverness of Lady Julia completely deceived, was severely mortified at her own want of discernment, and deeply incensed against those by whom she was made such a dupe. Flattered and conformed to, by her accomplished visitor, she extolled her in return, as surpassing every other young person in high-breeding, good sense, propriety, and discrimination; until Alicia, ever jealously inclined, began to discover that her fascinating friend was not quite the pattern of perfection for which she was held up, and this schism in opinion, while it confirmed the admiration of the one and the distaste of the other, added not a little to Lady

Percy's mortification when outwitted by its object.

She received the extraordinary news at first with disbelief. But the run-away's letter, apologising for her necessary infringement upon decorum, was incontrovertible evidence. As upon other occasions, when forced to admit a disagreeable truth, Lady Percy had recourse to tears, hysterics, and fainting fits: until Dr. R—— happily arrived, when the necessity of talking to him superseded that of displaying so much sensibility, and as she never commended or blamed, liked or disliked, but in superlatives, the accommodating physician had to sit out a philippic against the offender, as immoderate as the praises with which he had hitherto been fatigued.

When Cameron's arrival was announced at the villa, a thrill of pleasure shot athwart Miss Percy's heart; for not, like her mother, overcome by the event of the morning, or inconsolable because the all-attractive Lady Julia had proved less perfect than she seemed, Alicia

found room for other feelings. The flatteries by which Campbell gained her favour, served, while they lasted, the double purpose of gratifying her vanity and amusing her thoughts; she also fancied that his attentions had excited Cameron's jealousy, whose temporary estrangement was placed to the account of pique; but, when Lady Julia, having secured the opportunity that Lady Percy's retired habits afforded her, effected the consummation of her selfish schemes, Alicia's eyes were opened, not only to the insincerity with which she was treated, but to her own mistaken folly. She was sufficiently vain to be deeply mortified that Campbell had really never been touched by her; and sufficiently proud to feel very much humiliated at being subjected to that neglect with which two persons, solely occupied by each other, (and the hour of caution at an end,) usually treat a third, who is placed in the unlucky predicament of a convenient screen.

Disappointment in new friends generally sends back the heart with renovated warmth to

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informed as she was of the cause, could not but observe the painful struggles of her victim.

She knew well whence Cameron's application for liberty was dated, was informed of its motive, was mistress of his secret. She witnessed his repugnance, but felt secure in the rectitude of his principles; and never were her manners so bland, or her kindnesses more multiplied, as when thus triumphing over the sacrifice of his happiness.

She watched him, however, without ceasing; for perfect trust was not one of her Ladyship's weak points; but she failed to detect any renewal of intercourse with the cottage, whose inhabitants were both feared and despised; little aware that a conquest she gloried in, was owing to the high characters of those so falsely appreciated, and whose strongest claims upon the heart of Cameron arose from their uncompromising rectitude.

For four weeks, the longest and most wretched of his life, he abstained from inquiring after Mrs. Drummond, although her wasted figure

was never from before his eyes; and if in that weary period he had one recollection less tormenting than another, it was of the fortunate impulse which prevented him from making her a participator in the cruel billet of the mischief-loving Lady Julia. Apprehension, however, for her health, which with ingenious sophistry he persuaded himself was his chief motive for wishing to hear something of the Corrie Glen, furnished a pretext for writing; and in a moment of uncontrollable feeling he penned a few lines to Ellen.

"Heaven only knows," he cried, "should her mother yet survive—if Ellen, firm as she is, may not sink under such accumulated misfortunes. Never! oh, never! can she now contribute to my happiness, but, am I, therefore, forbidden to be careful of hers? Hereafter she may receive me as a brother—perhaps suffer me to be her friend; unprotected as she seems, can I let the child of such parents remain uninquired for?—Why may not the husband of Alicia Percy, (if I am to be that husband,)—

supply a father's place to Ellen Drummond?—Why may not Alicia herself assume the pious office of the orphan's friend?"

Such were the solitary colloquies of Cameron—the fallible reasoning of a heart which would reconcile its wishes with its duties. Alas! the violent palpitations of that heart, for the several days during which he expected a reply to his letter, were sad proofs that the time was not come, when he could meet Ellen as a disinterested friend.

Her answer did arrive, and was delivered to him in Lady Percy's presence, whose quick eye detected at a glance the delicate female hand-writing and the well known post-mark. Her face crimsoned, so did Cameron's; his correspondence was revealed, and her indignation was so extreme, that to avoid betraying how much of his secret was already in her possession, she was obliged to quit the room.

Occupied with his letter, he perceived not the storm which was gathering; but instantly retreating with the precious treasure to where

he could peruse it undisturbed, he read, re-read, bathed it with tears, and pressed it with kisses before there was time to reflect upon the purport, or mark the brevity of its contents. The signature, dear as it was to his sight, could scarcely repay him for so laconic an epistle: Ellen's good sense and delicacy prevented her betraying any pique, could sweetness such as her's have cherished it. She wrote friendly, but cool—answered his inquiries for her mother's health, which was still declining, and had received a recent shock in the death of Lord Marsden; she satisfied him that there had been no intruding claimant, as during his former absence from the Corrie Glen; and subscribed herself his obliged and sincere friend.

He could scarcely expect that she would write at length, yet he suffered a cruel disappointment, and was still more unhappy than before.

So long as Lady Percy believed herself successful in subverting Cameron's will, so long did she restrain the expression of those resent-

ful feelings which lay *perdue* in the depth of her remembrance, since discovering his intimacy at the Corrie Glen. But from the unfortunate arrival of Ellen's letter, her suspicions fastened upon the real correspondent, and she became incapable of subduing the malignity of her temper; it broke out into violence upon the slightest provocation; and though she still abstained from directly taxing him with deceit, he was assailed by innuendoes a thousand times more galling to his generous mind: while the horror of a scene, and all the pro's and con's of a vindication, induced him to fly from, rather than meet such attacks. As a sort of atonement to Alicia for the increasing repugnance of his feelings toward herself, he bore with her mother in silence; but notwithstanding that he so persevered, the semblance of domestic peace was no longer present in that small circle where the demon of discord ruled, and as Lady Percy might have foreseen, he whom she studied to torment, began to fly from the fangs of the tormentor.

Just at this period, Arthur Macdonald arrived in Scotland, Cameron's old friend and school-fellow: not the broken soldier he had anticipated, but as a distinguished and successful officer, having obtained the first object of his ambition, a majority in an Highland regiment. It was his first visit after an absence of seven years; he had scarcely a day to spare for Edinburgh, but pressed Cameron warmly to accompany him home.

"I do not mean to frighten you into an ague fit," he said; "but never was study more visibly imprinted upon the face of man — ay, and anxious study too! It is quite absurd, Cameron; a few weeks sporting over our heathery hills will renovate your looks and shake off an impending illness. The old laird is well stocked with dogs, and will be charmed if you approve of his kennel. You will delight in his conversation, manners, and character. He is, I assure you, worth knowing; my sisters too— but it is injudicious to extol young ladies: they were mere children when I left them, such

children, however, that hours are ages till I again embrace them."

Cameron did not require much argument to convince him that an excursion into the western highlands would be a delightful resource, and as there were several weeks to get over before the commencement of term, he readily acceeded to Macdonald's plan. Alicia's health was perfectly restored, and though determined to act toward her with the respect and consideration she merited, he was as much determined not to be Lady Percy's slave.

Cameron and Macdonald were strolling along the flags of Princess-street, when they were met by Captain Campbell and Lady Julia; the latter dressed in bridal costume, and looking, as she really was, a very self-satisfied person. Shaking hands with Cameron, she called for his congratulations; talked in raptures of her late excursion, condoled with him upon his altered looks, recommended a tour, inquired with mock interest for Lady Percy, and with affection for Alicia.

"I trust," she continued, while an arch expression passed over her laughing face, "that you appreciated my kindness in bringing you home at so happy a moment. To lose such a scene would have been truly mortifying; the only drawback to my own pleasure was, that I could not witness the consternation of that well-regulated household, when my flight was discovered. Campbell knows that I wanted to run back again, and hide myself in a corner to hear all the comments, and espy the long faces. Lady Percy must have been superlative; that is always her degree of comparison. Do, pray, tell me some of the pretty things she has been saying ever since of her favourite?"

"Your Ladyship has often questioned my skill as a flatterer, and I fear you would not think me improved."

"Oh, I only insist upon truth for the present, and, so long as the honeymoon lasts, suffer no one to make polite speeches but my husband."

to him in terms of severe reproach; but having thus poured out the vials of her wrath upon paper, the effusion was repented of, committed to the flames, and that letter composed in its place, which carried such a disappointment to the Corrie Glen.

With Lady Percy, second thoughts were never sincere thoughts. Her wisdom, to speak correctly, deserved no other name than cunning; and being determined to exact the fulfilment of his bond, she smothered her real feelings, and pursued the plan most likely to effect her purpose.

It was in consequence of such a plan, that he met with so cordial a reception; and that Lady Percy, affecting to believe him equally interested with herself in Alicia's recovery, placed the latter under his exclusive care; talked of her as a decided invalid; appeared to be wholly engrossed by solicitude for her health, and worried her into imaginary ailments by continual watchfulness. If pale, she was aguish; if blooming, consumptive; and

the unfortunate Cameron had not been many hours at home when he found himself constituted head-nurse to a capricious and petted child, who was licensed to torment him without ceasing. He walked, rode, read with her; in short there was scarcely an hour of the day which was not devoted to her. A slave at the gallies could not loathe his chain more absolutely than he did, while, restless and miserable, he dared not throw it off, or venture to wound the heart of one, who, he was told, lived only on his smiles, by answering her appealing looks of tenderness otherwise than by enduring them.

Yet it was not that the command of his time would have rendered him less unhappy—alas! for him the delights of literature were at an end. They had been too recently shared with another, as sensible of their beauties as himself: they could no more be a solitary enjoyment. Philosophy was no longer the mistress in whose cold charms his mind might recover its ardour; neither was his the repose of indifference, or the quiet of resignation; and Lady Percy, well

Cameron could not have chanced upon a more unfavourable time for announcing his intended tour; as to Lady Percy's increasing suspicion of himself was now added her vexation that Lady Julia Campbell should make so brilliant a re-appearance, and she therefore attributed his proposed excursion with Macdonald to a very different motive but the one assigned.

"May I beg leave to inquire," she said, when he ventured to renew the subject, "if the engagements which have latterly so much ingrossed your time will permit you to favour me with half an hour's very necessary consultation, before setting out upon this suddenly adopted plan of rambling, Heaven knows where?"

He assured her that the present afternoon was entirely at her disposal.

"You are extremely condescending," she replied, in a tone of mock humility. "May I ask when your time is to be at your own disposal—when every sort of business is to be left off?"

"Never, I hope," said Cameron. "What a useless member of society should I in that case become!"

"And you really are of opinion, that a gentleman of fortune should devote his time to the multitude? that it is consistent with a certain rank to talk of and attend to business like a trades-person? that it is a misfortune to be independent of labour? But I might have foreseen all this—I might have guessed that, to sustain a high station with propriety and understand its duties, it is absolutely necessary to practise them."

"And I should hope," said he good-humouredly, "that, with a determination to fulfil duties, it might not be difficult to understand them."

"You mistake. I do not mean common-place duties—duties that every one can learn—I mean the knowledge how to grace an elevated situation, rather than to disgrace it. I do not mean, just doing right in an honest way, and attending to the every-day calls of every-day

life, like your persons in the middle classes, who are ignorant of the usages of fashionable society."

"Such persons are much indebted to your Ladyship. The character of doing right, and attending to relative duties, is no indifferent praise."

"You do not understand."

"Perhaps not," said he, with rather an impatient sigh.

"Oh, very possible. Nothing more probable. I am, no doubt, very ignorant; but so far I may know,—that is, if I know any thing —what is essential to the support of a certain rank. I have been accustomed to that. It is nothing new to me."

"Nor to those, I hope," said Cameron, attempting to avert her wrath, "who have the advantage of your Ladyship's example."

"I do not make myself understood. I am unfortunate in not expressing my meaning. When I speak of the privileged orders, I mean those in whom honour, sincerity, gratitude, are